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 ZIFF DAVIS MEDIA

January 2002
ISSUE 52



PlayStation

**OVER 30 PS2
REVIEWS INSIDE!**

IF IT'S OUT, WE'VE REVIEWED IT

FINAL FANTASY X

PLUS! 18 RPGS FOR 2002 AND BEYOND

FIRST REVIEW!

**CRAZY MASCOTS TO
BEAT CRASH BANDICOOT?**

JAK & DAXTER

The Precursor Legacy

33 HOT PREVIEWS

HARRY POTTER, SOUL CALIBUR 2, TEKKEN 4

**SAVE CASH! 21 GAMES
TO RENT THIS HOLIDAY**

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12 PAGES! METAL GEAR SOLID 2 • GRAND THEFT AUTO III • GT3

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1 of **16**
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


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- 3

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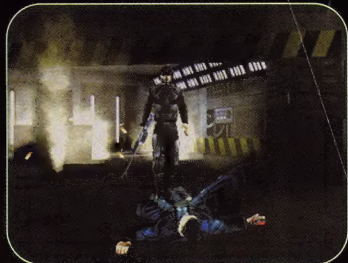
Animated Blood
Animated Violence



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PlayStation®2

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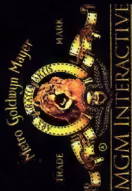
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 A writer for the *Chicago Sun-Times*, the *San Diego Tribune*, the *New York City Magazine*, and the *Fresno Bee*, John brings his considerable knowledge to our media pages. He also runs the popular

www.gamedad.com



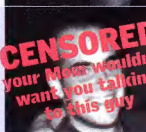
SHUJI KOBAYASHI
 In the past, we had Shuji shoot the developers from Twisted Metal: Black and Silent Hill. This time we set him up to snap shots of Naughty Dog. Rumor has it that he ended up in a bondage shop buying studded collars. But it's all speculation.



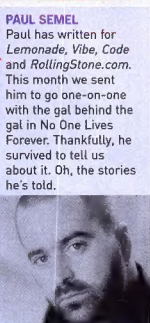
PENNY ARCADE

They make us laugh. And we're betting they'll make you laugh, too. Read the Penny Arcade guys' strip for the month, then visit their Web site for even more. And don't forget to order their new book while you're at it.

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SCOTT STEINBERG
 Scott tends to write for *Maxim*, *Playboy*, *The Source* and every other publication Mom warned you about. This month, see what our man on the town had to say in our Previews section about EA's new Speed: Hot Pursuit 2.



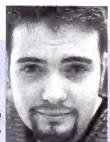
PAUL SEMEL
 Paul has written for *Lemonade*, *Vibe*, *Code* and *Rolling Stone*. This month we sent him to go one-on-one with the gal behind the gal in *No One Lives Forever*. Thankfully, he survived to tell us about it. Oh, the stories he's told.

Have a very playful and happy holiday!

What a fantastic couple of months we've just had, eh?

This has been the best holiday season for video games ever. The PS2 is going from strength to strength thanks to some amazing games (*Metal Gear Solid 2*, *Grand Theft Auto III*, *SSX Tricky*...the list goes on and on). It has some strong new competition from Microsoft and Nintendo, which is only going to push things to get better—and even the PS one is making a plucky showing. Did you know that global sales of the PS one this holiday season will almost certainly outperform that of the GameCube and Xbox combined? Not bad for a six-year-old system with few new games to shout about, is it?

We've been getting a lot of mail lately from disgruntled fans of the little gray box saying that we're not supporting it enough any more. Although it might not seem so, we go out of our way to cover every single new game that we can get our hands on for the system, and we promise we'll continue to do so for as long as games are made. Sure, our magazine is becoming more and more focused on the PlayStation 2, but that's simply a reflection of the way that things are changing. More games are made for PS2, more people are buying PS2 games. The term "PlayStation" is Sony's gaming brand...it's kinda like how "Walkman" describes portable audio. Being the *Official PlayStation Magazine* means we'll cover everything for Sony consoles...whether it's PS one, PS2 or, in the future, PS3 and beyond.



John Davison
Editor in Chief

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The Entertainment Software Rating Board provides information about video game content. ESRB ratings are intended as guidelines only; parents should still monitor minors' purchases.



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Note: Rockstar will be following ESRB guidelines for M rated games in the marketing of this game.

This game contains violent language and behavior and may not be appropriate for persons under the age of 17. It is a comic interpretation of gangster activity and the story, events and incidents portrayed herein are fictitious. No identification or similarity to actual persons, living or dead, or to actual events is intended or should be inferred. Any resemblance is coincidental. The makers and publishers of this videogame do not in any way endorse, condone or encourage this kind of behavior.



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Tekken 4 •

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It's been costing you paycheck after paycheck at the arcade. But it will soon land on the PS2. Find out the newest details on a game best described as "arcade perfect."



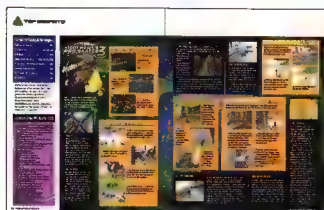
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Don't know how to grab the Secret Tape dangling high above the rooftops of Los Angeles while still on your board? We do, and you will, too. We solve all of your Secret Tape woes and hand out some tip freebies so you can keep on truckin'



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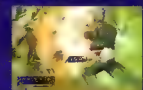
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We're not that exciting without your 2¢. Send us an e-mail at OPM@ziffdavis.com when you can.

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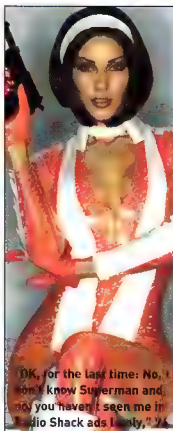
Tony Hawk 3, Grand Theft Auto III, Metal Gear Solid 2. We've got sequels and how to beat them.

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We've got a handful of PlayStation funny this month including box art, some more wacky memory card icons and a few other giggles.



What inspires a great game music composer like Yasunori Mituda? Two words: Internet.



OK, for the last time: No, I don't know Superman and, no, you haven't seen me in a Radio Shack ads lately.



Don't point at the Hulk's mouth. He'll break them, 80.



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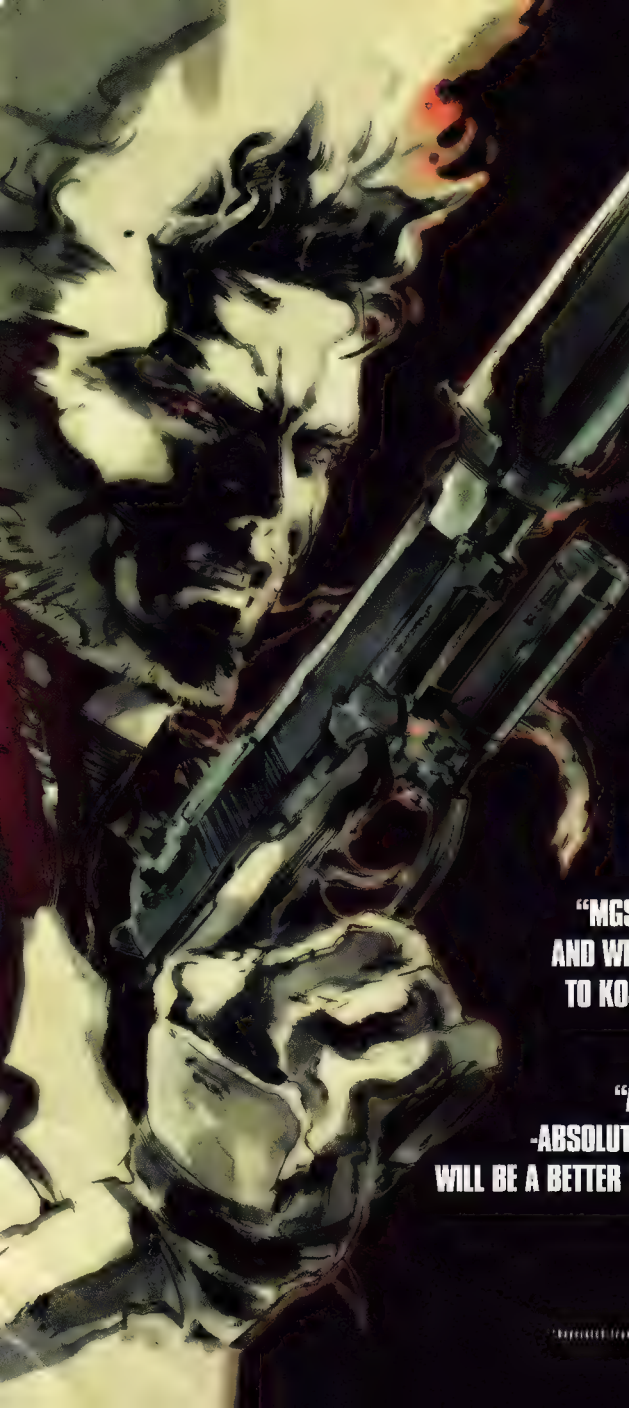
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"FINAL SCORE 10/10."

PSM

**"THIS GAME IS THE
REASON YOU BOUGHT
A PLAYSTATION 2."**

PSM

**"I KNOW EVERYONE IS
EXPECTING THIS GAME TO BE
GOOD, BUT I HAVE TO TELL YOU
I WAS SHOCKED AT JUST
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AND WE ARE ONCE AGAIN ON OUR KNEES
TO KOJIMA-SAN AND HIS HEROIC TEAM."**

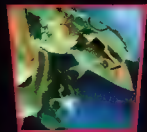
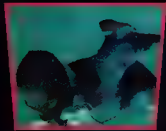
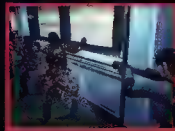
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NEXTGENERATION

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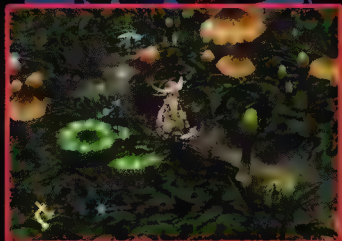
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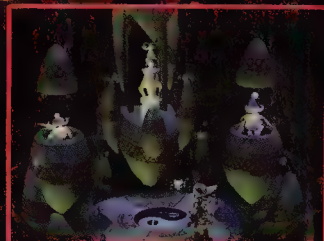
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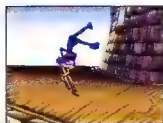


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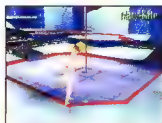


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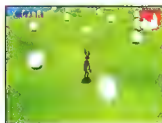
Sesame Street Sports

In the true spirit of competition, slug it out with all those legends from that grandest of streets.



Mary-Kate and Ashley's Crush Course

Crush course, for sure. Already fights are breaking out with OPM over who's cuter: Mary-Kate or Ashley.



Sheep Raider

Looney Tunes has never been so loony. Dodge Sam the Sheep-dog and kidnap some woolly beasts.



Hot Wheels Extreme Racing

This game is so "extreme" it should be spelled with three X's. Exxtreme. Yes.

Silver Screen

From the movie, inspired Iron the video game. Tomb Raider made its name on the PS one before Angelina Jolie's bee-stung lips hit the theater. Now J.K. Rowling's novels are going to land on the silver screen and the PS one, and Monsters, Inc. is doing the same. And we've got them both!



Jak and Daxter: The Precursor Legacy

You've read the cover story, now watch our long video.



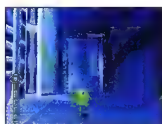
Twisted Metal: Small Brawl

They may be smaller, but they're just as mean.



Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone

You've read the books. Now take a look at the next great PS one game.



Monsters, Inc.

Check out the newest in Disney's fantastic CG arsenal with this peek at the wonderfully cute and cuddly "monsters."



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Did you buy a copy of our magazine that did not contain a demo CD? Simply send the receipt in an envelope marked "OPM Replacement Disc" to the address below with the name and address of the store plus your phone number and address and we'll send you the disc. Make sure you specify which month the corresponding disc belongs to in order to ensure you get the right one.

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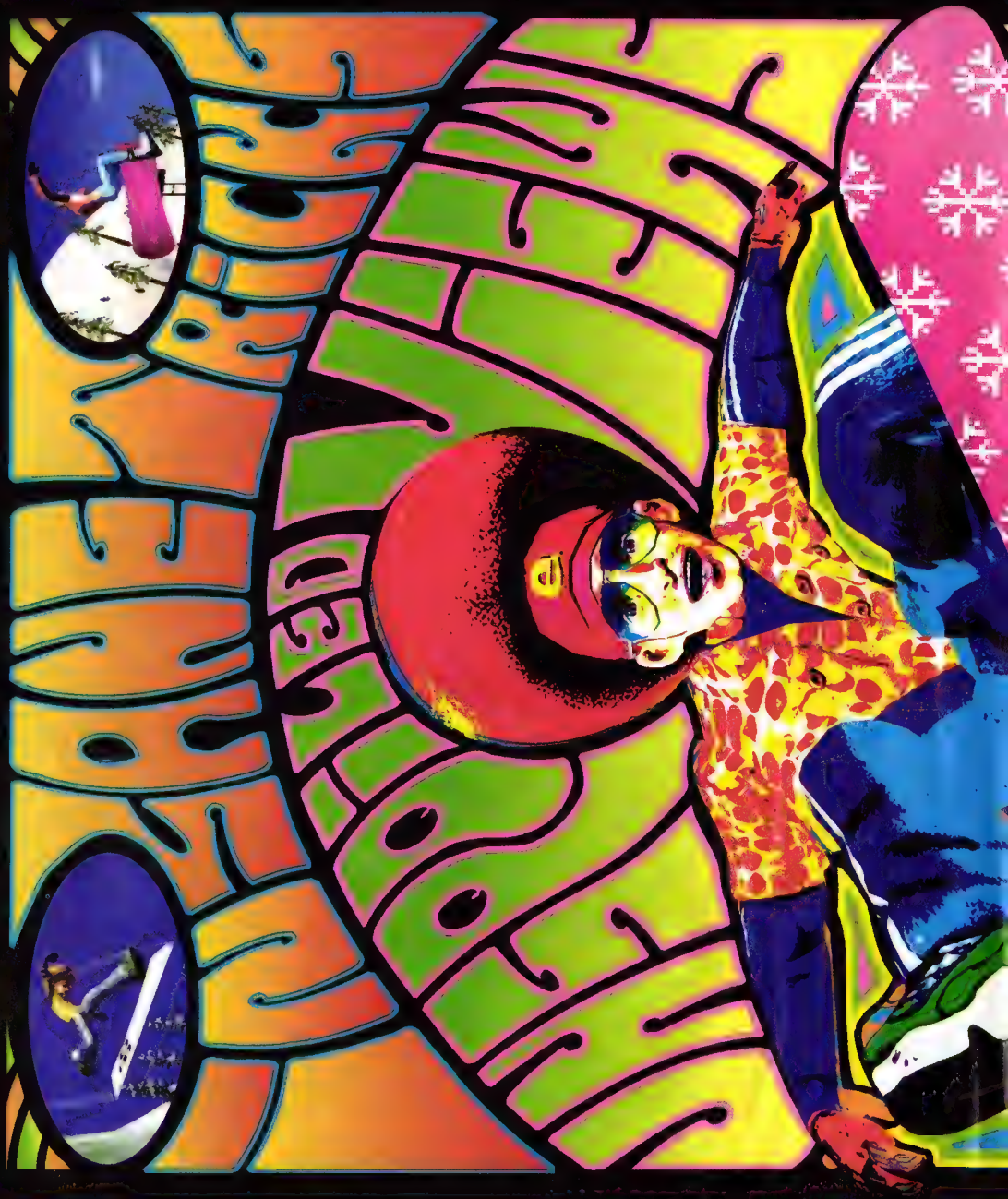
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Think you have what it takes to write the Letter of the Month? Send us your video game expositions and you could win the official OPM Box of Joy. We pack our Box of Joy with an assortment of nifty goodies from all your favorite software companies.

Misdirected Anger

AHHHH! I am very angry with your magazine and for a very good reason (not really). You rated quite a few PS2 games really low and gave them cruddy reviews...and it's not like I don't believe you, but I promised myself to listen to you and not go close to any of those games like Arctic Thunder and Spec Ops. But it's not fair! I wanna try these games out and see for myself how poop-like a game can be! But I'm afraid to rent them because I'm not into those genres and I don't wanna waste money.
SoMeSaTe101@aol.com

Uh, so...what's the problem again?

Screenshot Snafu

On your review for NBA Live 2002, you accidentally put in a screenshot of Ace Combat 04 (which probably makes NBA Live better anyway). Oh, well. Your magazine is still the best.
Debie Bhulai
mollysmag@gmail.com

Yep. Some nasty gremlins got into the works and swapped out the proper screen for the wrong one. So, to rectify our error, below is the correct NBA Live 2002 screen.



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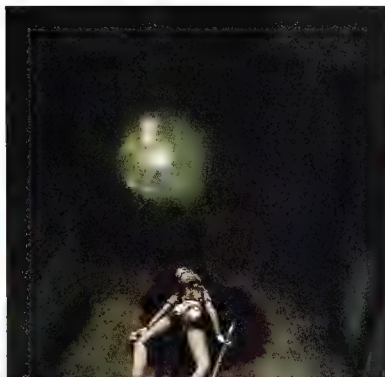
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Wanted: Dead or Alive

I read in your November issue that Dead or Alive 3 is coming to the PS2, but my friend still says that it's exclusive to the Xbox. So I was wondering, which one is it? I liked DOA2 so I'm very interested in DOA3. What gives?
Derek Hanson
xeno74@hotmail.com

You're right to be confused, Derek. Officially, Tecmo hasn't announced Dead or Alive 3 for



Letter of the Month

Good day, OPM! I hope you're doing well, because I'm doing *really* great—especially after what happened a few nights ago! It was the most gratification I have had in quite a while.

You see, my girlfriend came to visit me at work, and she asked if I wanted to go over to her house and watch a scary movie. *Bing!* goes the bell in my head. I had just purchased Silent Hill 2, so I told her about it and offered the idea of playing that instead of the scary movie. She looked at me strangely and said something that started the evening off to perfection.

"How scary could a game be?"
I was blown away. I couldn't believe what she said. You see, I had rented it before and experienced the true meaning of the word *fear*...but her—she didn't see it coming!

Anyway, I got off of work giggling merrily to myself, packed up the PS2, and took off to her house (not bringing the scary movie because I was confident the game would do the trick).

She met me at the door with a disappointed look, she was quite upset that I didn't bring the movie. I tried my best to relax (which made her even more upset) and she laid me to the TV.

"This better be quick," she said (and no, she wasn't talking about sex), so I hooked up the PS2 and put the game in.

"What's the plot?" she asked, clearly annoyed with me.

"Well...his dead wife sent him a letter, and told him to join her in Silent Hill," I told her.

I must say she was shocked. She was used to games like Mario 64, Yoshi's Island, etc. She had never heard of a game with such a dark plot.

I loaded my game and turned the lights off to set the mood. I played for about 10 minutes and she was clawing at my arm, cutting the circulation off! I could barely feel my left arm because she was holding on so tight—and I was only out on the streets! It appears that the sounds were getting to her. (Like they got to me, but in a bad way!)

I looked at her for a moment and her eyes were glued to the TV. I smirked and continued until I got to the apartments. The atmosphere is so dark in that area, so I knew this place would scare her (she's a little scared of the dark).

As soon as I entered the apartment she asked me if there was a light switch. I smiled and didn't answer.

After a good 15 minutes of playing she was getting *really* into it, holding me tighter every time I opened a door or when the music suddenly changed and got louder. She even hid her face in my chest when monsters attacked me! I was loving it, every second. It was better than a scary movie!

She eventually begged me to turn it off, so I did the manly thing and listened to my woman. She was quite shocked.

"What did you think?" I asked as she held me tight.

"Bring it over tomorrow night," she said.

I walked home that night very pleased with myself (and Konami). I found my bed and slept like a log. I wonder if she ever fell asleep after having the *(insert bad poop word here)* scared out of her. To tell you the truth, I hope not.

"JaktheDamned"
JaktheDamned@aol.com

the PS2, and the company maintains that it's currently an Xbox-only game. However, our sources insist that a PS2 version will happen at some point and it will likely come in the form of an upgrade pack of some sort. If you remember, DOA2 was originally announced as Dreamcast-exclusive but was later upgraded as the DOA2: Hardcore PS2 version. Can we guarantee that it will hit the PS2? It's too early to say. But would we bet on it happening at some point? Definitely. Either way, though, the PS2 will be flooded with some of the best fighters out there (Soul Calibur 2, Tekken 4, Virtua Fighter 4) very soon.

Defending Dr. Who

Enough slamming of Dr. Who already. I'll be the first to admit that the series has been many low points as high ones. But whether or not you like the show, you have to admit that it makes for one damn fine game license. Think about it—all the bases are covered for a stellar action/adventure/RPG:

1. The doctor's regenerations represent your character's "lives" in the game.
2. He's a TimeLord—travel through time and space to anywhere at any time. No limits here.
3. Overabundance of creatures (Daleks, Cybermen—and let's not forget his nemesis, the Master—to name a few).
4. Sidekicks galore.

If someone could piece all of these elements together (properly, and with a little 'frickin' panache, please), they'd have a hit. (I leave you with two words: downloadable installments.)

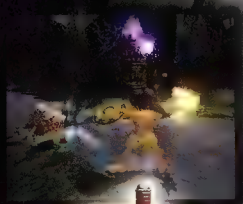
Jeff Tustin
Deep River, Ontario, Canada

Er...eh...buh...DAMNIT, Jeff! We so wanted to make fun of you and Dr. Who again, but you somehow managed to make a convincing argument. So we'll lay off for now.





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PlayStation 2



Violence

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"About 99 percent of the RPGs just let you walk into people's houses even if they don't know you or you don't know them."

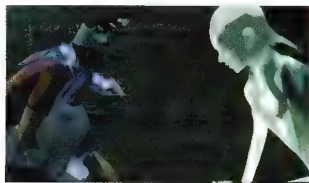
இன்கோ டீக்கோ
In issue 50 I've figured out what Joe was saying on page 151. It was written in the language of "Ico." For those of you too slow, it says, "Joe has been so swept away by the majesty of Ico that he just has not seemed himself lately." I figured it out by just four words in your 48th issue, "Now What?" and "Come Again?" These headlines in the Ico feature were words that had "Ico code" written underneath them. As for the rest of the letters, I just used my natural intelligence. Thanks for keeping me busy.
"Sabina"
Ruf786@aol.com

Nice work, Sabina. You were the first (and one of only three) to figure it out. Congrats. You win absolutely nothing.

Ico Beatdown

The story that you are about to read is about Ico. For the most part, it's true. I'll keep you guessing on that one.

"Hey," I said to my friend, "want to play Ico?"



"What's that?" he replied. And that's when the trouble started.
"What's Ico?" Ico is gaming at its finest. Nay, it's more than a game, it's an interactive fairy tale, high art of the finest class!"

"OK," said the friend, "let's play Ico." And it was so. After solving a series of puzzles and defending Yorda a few times, my friend said the unspeakable. I'm not sure this should even be printed.

"This is boring!" the friend quite frankly blurted out.

"But...Ico...so beautiful!"

"It's not my kind of game. Let's go back to playing ATV Offroad Fury."

And that's precisely the moment I brought a blunt object down directly on his head.

That is how much I love Ico.
Just don't tell the police, or anything.

Philip Nova
philipnova@ym.com

QUICK HITS

HE WAS WAY TOO SMELLY. There's Liquid Snake and Solid Snake, so where's Gas Snake?
"I guess he's at Iggressu827@hotmail.com"

THUMBS UP. I would like to humbly submit a review for Silent Hill 2. Wow. Thank you for your time.
Zachary Peterson
andulms.dream@hotmail.com

JUST SAY NO. My name is Gerrad but all my friends call me Geroves. I love video games, and one day I wish to be in one. The reason why I'm writing you is because I'm in juvenile hall, and I don't know what new games are coming out. I love reading your magazine, to me it's like having sex with Lara Croft. I'm not a drug addict, but I'm craving for a PlayStation magazine. I'm not playing either. I really got the shakes in here. I should be getting out on March 1, but if I don't read one of your magazines soon, I don't think I'm going to make it.
Gerrad Fairfield, CA

Open-Door Policy

There's just one thing I don't get about RPGs. Why can you just walk into people's houses? You don't even have to knock on a door and ask, "Can I come in?" I like RPGs but I hate now they do that. About 99 percent of the RPGs just let you walk into people's houses even if they don't know you or you don't know them. The only RPG that I can think of that doesn't do that is Shenmue for Dreamcast. I'll go into some of the people's houses in the RPG and they won't say get out of their house until I talk to them, and then I still stay in there. I know you probably think that it's stupid for me to complain about it, but I think it's strange. I'm wondering if it's just me or if other people think that's strange
"Alex"
Basketballvper5@aol.com

Yep, it's definitely strange. But so are you.

I Want His Job!

I read your "Game Jobs" article in Issue 51 about Brody Philips, who is one of the people responsible for transforming Japanese games into English. Translation has always been an interest of mine (not to mention my love for PlayStation). To be completely honest, I want this man's job! While this may seem just a little premature since I'm a senior in high school just beginning to look at colleges, I'm really interested in learning more about a career as a localization specialist or something similar. Can you give me any advice?
Aisha Kuduro
hotaru323@yahoo.com

One thing Brody stressed to us is the need for a good education. So it sounds like you're on the right path by exploring colleges. Just be sure to study both English as well as foreign languages, because you'll need to be skilled in both.

Screen Caption Contest

Every month we run a pic, and it's your job to come up with a witty caption. E-mail your captions to OPM@ziffdavis.com and mark the subject **CAPTION CONTEST**. The new picture, from Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance, should be easy enough.



WINNER!
"Yeah, baby. I'm wearing red and blue tights with a big spider on it...hello? Hello?"
Stephan Stomberg, via email



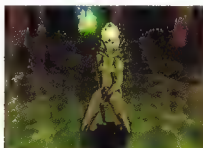
QUESTION OF THE MOMENT

Last month, we asked you what you'd like to play online with your PS2. Next month, tell us which RPG besides Final Fantasy X you're most looking forward to. E-mail us at OPM@ziffdavis.com. Mark your notes **RPG WISH LIST**.

I could play TimeSplitters 2. I think any one would be hard-pressed to find a better anger-management program than blasting someone you don't even know with a bazooka, phaser or laser cannon.
Jonathan Kopacz
JonK@RKCUSTOM.com

I would LOVE to play online: Smuggler's Run 3, Mortal Kombat, Baldur's Gate, Gauntlet, a WWF title, Zone of the Enders 2, a version of Front Mission 3 or Ring of Red, Silent Hill, Star Wars: Starfighter II... and, on yeah, how about Gran Turismo 4.
David A. Kephart
davidk2@ix.netcom.com

FFXI, FFXI, FFXI, FFXI and Final Fantasy XI. I think that's pretty much it!
Mustafa Al-Ghneeh
proxitex@msn.com

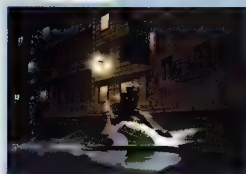


CAPTION THIS
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STUDIOS

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Four pages of DVD reviews, movie news, music reviews, Web sites, book reviews and much more!



Kraihuk

State of the PlayStation

Despite a now-crowded video game market, the PlayStation's future looks bright indeed

in a holiday season abuzz with the launch of two new game consoles—Nintendo's GameCube and Microsoft's Xbox—PlayStation owners may be wondering how Sony stacks up in light of the new competition and what the company has planned for its two consoles in the months ahead. With that in mind, we put together an update with all the info that you, as a PlayStation gamer, should know.

Big Numbers

Despite the ailing economy, PS2s are selling faster than ever. In mid-October, Sony revealed that it had shipped more than 7 million consoles in North America, and a good portion of these had already sold through. Which means that before the GameCube or Xbox even hit store shelves in mid-November, Sony already had a massive head start. And because of the hefty sales expected for the PS2 this holiday season and beyond, Sony says that by March 2002 it intends to have shipped 10 million PS2s in North America—an astounding number considering the console was first introduced here less than a year and a half ago. Sony also announced that it's now breaking even on the costs of developing PS2s, meaning that it is no longer losing money on the hardware (which is fairly standard at the start of every game platform's life cycle).

On the other hand, investment firm Morgan Stanley states that Microsoft stands to lose over \$1 billion on its Xbox hardware by 2004.

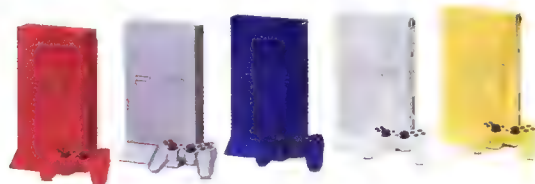
The PS one is also expected to have a stellar holiday season. Market analysts state that because of the weakened economy, many consumers will gravitate to the less costly console rather than the newer platforms. Believe it or not, retailers say they expect to sell more PS ones this holiday season than either the Xbox or GameCube. Not bad for a six-year-old platform.

Long Live the PS one!

As you've probably noticed by our limited preview coverage, software for the PS one has dwindled to just a trickle. But with 30 million of these consoles installed in U.S. homes, many companies still consider the PS one market quite viable and intend to support it well into next year. In fact, a publisher called eGames announced in October that it would begin to provide games for the platform. Sony claims that at least 50 more PS one titles are currently

What color would you buy?

Sony recently released special-colored PS2s in Japan to celebrate 20 million units being shipped worldwide. While there's no word yet on a U.S. release, a recent poll shows that favorite color for U.S. gamers is blue, followed by red. Despite not being a legit choice, paid also made a solid showing.





This holiday season, retailers expect to sell more PS ones than either the Xbox or GameCube.

in the works. The PS one should also get a boost thanks to its relatively new design and its portability aspect, especially since Sony finally released a PS one LCD monitor of its own this November

PS2's Unlimited Potential

Now over a year old, the PS2 is really getting into the swing of things thanks to some of the finest software this industry has ever seen. According to Sony, though, this is just the start of even better things to come. The company recently finished work on a PS2 performance analyzer (a program that measures how heavily a piece of software is using the PS2 hardware). Remember how Gran Turismo 3 was once said to have pretty much maxed out the PS2's capabilities? Well, having conducted a test with its performance analyzer, Sony now says that the game is using only a paltry 25 percent of the PS2's potential power. Sony is now offering this tool to its third-party developers to help them figure out better ways to tap the PS2's incredible power.

As for software, Sony is also starting to toy with new hardware packages for the PS2. In Japan, to commemorate 20 million PS2s being shipped worldwide, Sony sold a special-edition line of colored PS2s on its Web site. Costing nearly double the price of a standard PS2, these colored consoles sold out within five minutes! No word yet, though, on whether Sony will bring these special PS2s to the U.S.

Sony is also hard at work on its PS2 online plans, although it's hit a few snags along the way. Not all of Sony's online games are ready for release yet, putting the Network Adaptor's planned holiday release into question. Lots of indicators point to Sony simply holding off another few months to tweak some of its online titles. Either way, the plan is to have at least a handful of online playable games on shelves by this spring. By that time the PS2's Hard Disc Drive should also see a release, completing the full PS2 online package.

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BIG-SCREEN EVIL



RESIDENT EVIL—GROUND ZERO

The rumors about a Resident Evil movie are almost as old as the series itself, but a big-screen version finally seems like a reality. While it was first thought that zombie-specialist George Romero (*Dawn of the Dead*) would be directing the movie, the production company apparently didn't like his script and so it was rewritten several times by several authors. Then, after a quiet period, last March German production company Constantin Film announced that it would

Purefoy and German actress Heike Makatsch. The movie is being directed by Paul Anderson (*Mortal Kombat*, *Event Horizon*). Other notable credits include the production designer (and Oscar-nominee) Richard Bridgland (*Richard III*) and Richard Yuricich, who handled the visual effects in *Mission: Impossible 2*.

As the story goes, Alice and Rain lead a commando team into the Hive, a huge genetic-research facility. One hour earlier, a virus broke free in this building and killed the entire research staff. As a side-effect, the virus turned the people into zombies within seconds, and now Alice has just three hours to isolate it before it destroys the world. But Alice and Rain soon find out that the zombies aren't the only threat in the facility. They also have to battle a supercomputer.

Paul Anderson opted for a story that strays from the series because he wanted to avoid making everything too predictable. As he's said in several interviews, he didn't want to use characters from the game because then viewers would know whether or not the characters survive, which would limit the thrill of watching the movie. All-new characters also allow for an all-new story, which in general might be a good addition to the Resident Evil universe. In an interview with a German TV station, Milla



Jovovich recently said her character, Alice, shares similarities with Alice in Wonderland—including the dark and twisted elements of that character.

The movie started shooting last spring in a studio in Berlin, and the team is currently busy in post-production and doing the cut of the movie. It's said to hit theaters in early 2002, with rumors hinting at an April release.



be producing the movie, code-named *Resident Evil—Ground Zero*. But that wasn't the only surprise the company had in store: The lead role of Alice is to be played by none other than the lovely Milla Jovovich (*The Fifth Element*). Other actors include Michelle Rodriguez (*Girlfight*) playing the role of Rain, Eric Mabius (*Cruel Intentions*), James



NEW PS2 RESIDENT EVIL GAME!

Although Capcom is currently focusing its Resident Evil efforts on the GameCube (see last month's issue for more on that), the masters of survival horror do have another PS2 game on the way: *Gun Survivor 2: Resident Evil—Code: Veronica*. The Guncon-compat-

ible shooter has a plotline that's set during the *Code: Veronica* story. It hits Japan this winter (see its cover to the left), and a U.S. version is expected to be ready by early 2002. Recent rumors also suggest that Resident Evil 4 may still be PS2-bound.

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Say Hello to Hitomi

Namco has revealed its new sports CG cover girl, Hitomi Yoshino. Look for her to grace several PS2 games, including MotoGP 2 and Alpine Racer 3.

ZOE FLOWER ELUSIVE EXCLUSIVE

Last night I had a dream—well, more of a nightmare actually—in which Hideo Kojima had left Konami for Japan to work for Microsoft exclusively. I watched in horror, unable to move, as Kojima opened a large green door and entered a gargantuan X in the middle of a forest. At this point, the Tetley Tea dwarves showed up and I'm not at liberty to recant the rest of my sordid little fantasy. Suffice it to say, I woke up pondering some deep thoughts (no, not about the elfin experience).

What would we do if our favorite game developers fell out of love with PS2 and moved on to younger, more robust hardware? With assorted next-gen systems amassing on retail shelves around the globe, this question is no longer the realm of just my warped dreams. A simple glance at a current release list will see multiple listings for the same game on different platforms (even Metal Gear Solid X is there), often hitting store shelves within mere weeks of each other, if not on the same day. Granted, developers should have the right to capitalize on all the systems they want, but what state will the industry be in if we continue this trend?

Sure, PlayStation may always have Gran Turismo, Sweet Tooth and Naughty Dog, and Nintendo is bound to hoard Pokémon and Zelda, with Xbox clinging to Munch and Abe for dear life. But will this be enough for us to differentiate between the systems? If 90 percent of the top games are spanning all platforms, and if top designers continue to cavort from one console to the next faster than you can say Lorne Lanning, can we expect our beloved PS2 to remain unique for much longer? This cross-pollination and repurposing of content doesn't sit well with me, particularly since so much of it was founded on PlayStation's success. But even I admit that I could be swayed toward another system if my beloved Solid Snake was suddenly available in the billion-polygon range, with an online chat component thrown in.

After all, we're just gamers looking for our next fix. In our most basic form, we're superficial MTV youths and technomancers who thrive on instant gratification, and we're not loyal to anything that doesn't give us the best experience possible. We'll stick with PS2 as long as it's got something special to offer us over the competition, be it price, content or controller quality. But don't expect us to stick much longer than that. (Don't hold back, Zoe—tell us how you really feel!)

PS2 has been delivering the goods through the ongoing systems war, so I'm in no rush to defect. But I would sleep better at night, knowing less games were slipping across enemy lines. And maybe I'll dream (dwarfless) that Shigeru Miyamoto reads my column and defects from Nintendo to Sony.

Zoe Flower is quite a big fan of Metal Gear Solid and its creator, Hideo Kojima. She's also a multimedia superstar, with TV, Web and print credits to her name. She's English, lives in Canada, and has a Web site where you can find a couple of new photos of her, along with a cute little picture of a mouse and a flower on it, at www.zoeflower.com



Sony Invests In Square

Despite the great success of Final Fantasy X in Japan (the game has already sold more than 2.5 million copies), Square has been hit pretty hard by, among other things, the less-than-stellar performance of its movie, *Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within* (instead of an expected profit of \$5 million, Square reported an \$83 million loss—ouch!). The company needed a sizeable cash infusion, and fast. Nintendo and Microsoft both made offers (possibly to try to break Square's links with Sony), but ultimately Square approached Sony for help and a deal was struck.

Sony invested \$124 million in Square and now is the second-largest shareholder in the company (at 18.6 percent). And while this doesn't necessarily mean that Square can create software only for Sony platforms, Square says it intends to stay exclusive to PlayStation. "We are not necessarily obligated to Sony because of this deal," said Square President Hisashi Suzuki. "But we can offer software to the best-selling hardware maker, and at this time there is no doubt that Sony is the best." As for the immediate future, Square's

first online Final Fantasy title, Final Fantasy XI (pictured above), will remain PS2-exclusive.

Interestingly, Square mentioned Sony's investment marks a rebirth of sorts for the company. "We are looking to return to the days of when Square shined," said Suzuki. When asked what he meant by this, Suzuki explained that recently Square had gone off course, relying far too much

"At this time there is no doubt that Sony is the best." —Square President Hisashi Suzuki

on the Final Fantasy franchise. "We released one Final Fantasy right after another and I think it hurt the franchise," Suzuki says that Square intends to now return to the days when it could sell millions of games without the Final Fantasy name. This certainly sounds like a great new attitude—and it's definitely great news for PS2 owners.

DECEMBER CALENDAR

2 SUNDAY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It's a babe birthday bonanza! Britney Spears is 20, Nelly Furtado is 23, and Lucy Liu is 33. Yum! 	4 TUESDAY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tyra Banks turns 28. What to buy her? NFL GameDay 2002, Hidden Invasion, Dragon Rage, Jonny Moseley or Godai! Elemental Force? 	5 WEDNESDAY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Malcolm in the Middle star Frankie Muniz is 16. Walt Disney would be 100. And Mega Man X6 is out. 	7 FRIDAY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rat Pack remake Ocean's 11 in theaters with an all-star cast. 	11 TUESDAY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jak and Daxter, Tuganai: Atone, NHL FaceOff 2002, ESPN National Hockey Night 2002 and Hoshigami are all on sale today. 	14 FRIDAY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not Another Teen Movie hits theaters on the day that Nostradamus was born in 1503.
18 TUESDAY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christina Aguilera is 19, Katie Holmes is 23, Brad Pitt is 38, Steven Spielberg is 54, Stone Cold Steve Austin is 37, Jade Cocoon 2 and Grandia II hit stores. 	19 WEDNESDAY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring finally in theaters. Geeks of the world rejoice, and the rest of us admit that, yeah, we think it's pretty cool, too. 	21 FRIDAY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Majestic is out in theaters on the day that Kiefer Sutherland celebrates his 35th birthday. Madman Andy Dick is 36 and Jedi Samuel L. Jackson is 53. 	23 SUNDAY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eddie Vedder is 37, Harry "Voice from the Simpsons" Shearer is 58. 	25 TUESDAY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will Smith appears as Ali in theaters, Dido is 30, and Sir Isaac Newton was born in 1642. Oh, yeah...it's Christmas day. 	30 SUNDAY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tiger Woods [1975] is 26. And very rich. Richer than you.

All dates are correct as of press time. Any inaccuracies have nothing to do with us, although we're pretty certain the birthdays are correct. Stop reading this now and go back to the big words, OK?

TRY 'EM BEFORE YOU BUY 'EM

Not every PS2 game is a perfect purchase for every gamer. We give you 21 reasons to stop off at the local rental store.

 = Short but sweet	 = Limited appeal	 = Weird and wacky	 = Must play
 = Try something new	 = Play with your pals	 = Only worth the cost of a rental	 = Good but flawed
	10 Wheeler Acclaim ●●●	Wanna get behind the wheel of a big rig? Sure you do! But probably not for more than a few hours, huh? That's OK, though, because this game is only two hours long anyway.	  
	Ace Combat 04 Namco ●●●●	Part flight sim, part pick-up-and-play arcade action, Ace Combat 04 lets even first-time pilots fly like veterans. But it can be too easy for sim fanatics and too limited for newbies.	  
	Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance Interplay ●●●●●	Buy this if you have <i>any</i> interest in action/RPGs. But even if you're not a fan of the genre, this is still brilliant fun with two players—the perfect rental when hanging with a buddy.	  
	The Bouncer Square EA ●●●	One of the most disappointing first-gen PS2 games, The Bouncer is actually pretty darn good—for all two hours that it lasts! Still, it's more fun than renting <i>My Giant</i> .	  
	Dead or Alive 2: Hardcore Tecmo ●●●●	Fighting games have hit a bit of a lull lately—but there are still some good brawlers out there. We picked up DOA2 as the perfect quick fix for anyone craving some fast and furious fistcuffs.	  
	FIFA 2002 EA Sports ●●●●●	If you have the money, this is a game to buy. But soccer wears thin on American audiences pretty fast. So give this one a try rental-style and work your way into the World Cup.	  
	Ice Sony CEA ●●●●	The way we see it: Everyone <i>must</i> play this game. But some of you might not think the 10-hour completion time makes it worth a purchase. So rent it. And realize how wrong you were.	  
	Klonoa 2: Luncheon's Veil Namco ●●●●●	Maybe you think you're too cool for something as gosh-darn cutesy as Klonoa, but give this game a whirl and you'll be won over by its pure platforming bliss. We guarantee it.	  
	NBA Street EA Big ●●●●●	This is the kind of sports game that can win over even those grumpy RPGers who swear they won't touch the genre. Crisp, arcadey action, tons of depth, and a blast with two players.	  
	Okage: Shadow King Sony CEA ●●●	Some might balk at its lack of quality gameplay, but Okage has such an amusing story and wacky style that it's still worth trying. Plus, it's a great "first" RPG for those new to the genre.	  
	Onimusha: Warlords Capcom ●●●●	With better games like Devil May Cry out now, Onimusha no longer tops the must-buy list. But since it's only five hours long, and since it's still a great game, it's a definite rental.	  
	Silent Hill 2 Konami ●●●●●	Not sure if you're man enough for Silent Hill? Then try renting this game and playing it with the lights out and the shades drawn. Or play it with a date...and you might just get lucky.	  
	Silphed Working Designs ●●●●	The traditional shooter seems like a dying genre these days, but nothing beats the simple fun of just blasting away at everything in sight. There's not much depth here, though.	  
	Spy Hunter Midway ●●●●●	An arcade remake that in some ways is even better than the original? Yep. But beware: This game is so much fun that you might wind up buying it, despite its relatively short play time.	  
	Stretch Panic Conspiracy ●●●●●	So you have a scarf. And you use said scarf to tug on the oversized marmarines of these tiny ladies until they pop. Too weird for words? Yep. You've just got to play it to believe it.	  
	Super Bust-a-Move Namco ●●●	There's no denying the appeal of a good puzzler: Super Bust-a-Move fits that category—but just barely. Enjoy it alone, with friends, with a date...but you'll likely get bored after a few hours.	  
	Time Crisis II Namco ●●●●●	Wanna feel like you're at the arcade without leaving your home? Then rent this one, sit your lady butt down on the couch, and point and shoot at the TV for a few hours. Whee.	  
	TimeSplitters Eidos ●●●●●	First-person shooter fans have so many solid PS2 choices these days, but launch title TimeSplitters still stands out as the very best multiplayer pic of the lot. A great party game.	  
	Twisted Metal: Black Sony CEA ●●●●●	Maybe you're gunshy after the past two horrible outings in this series. Don't be. Take Black home for a night and find out just why this is the Twisted Metal game you always wished for.	  
	Unison Tecmo ●●●●	It's just wacky, wacky, wacky. Unison's oddball style and off-beat dancing gameplay should be experienced at least once. And maybe only just once. It's also a great date game.	  
	Zone of the Enders Konami ●●●●●	Let's finally get this game out of the shadow of the Metal Gear Solid 2 demo that came packed in with it. Look, just play this fantastic but too-short space shooter, OK? You won't regret it.	  

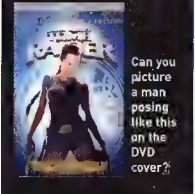


LOW RENT

Wanna play unlimited games, but you're on a limited budget? Or are you just too much of a couch potato to head on over to the store? Or are you a parent who wants to send your kid to gaming nirvana? Then check out www.redotane.com, which has a fantastic flat-fee program that lets you rent as many games as you want for only \$16.95 a month, shipping included.



But you didn't know this little tidbit: Lara Croft used to be a man. Now, we hope we aren't ruining any fantasies you may have had, but it's true: The popular babe who loves to raid the tombs was originally supposed to be a man. Because of similarities with Indiana Jones, though, Core Designs decided to change the character to the one we know and love today. Thank goodness they did, huh? This little nugget and a whole bunch of other info can be found in the special features supplements on the new Tomb Raider DVD.





Researcher: Mandy White

Wahlverfahren: Mehrheitswahl

References

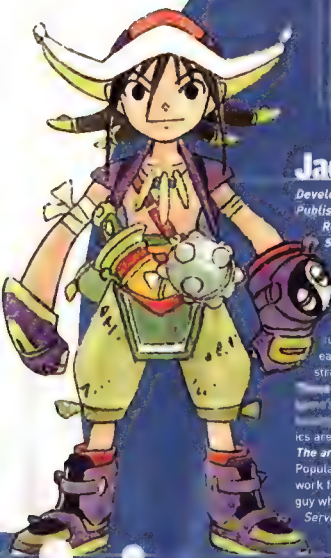
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...that the fans of Xenoo

9 RPGs that aren't Final Fantasy X

Sure, everyone's got Final Fantasy on the brain these days. But there's life beyond FFX. Here's nine more reasons to love your PS2 if you're an RPG fan.

Granted, longtime gamers know there's more to RPGs than just Final Fantasy. And even newcomers weaned on the flashy graphics and fiery pyrotechnics of the PS5 one Final Fantasy game have since learned about the broad range of fantastic role-playing titles out there. But never before has there been this many top-tier RPGs on the horizon. Of course, we fully understand you'll be playing nothing but FFX in the early part of this year. Heck, we're right there with ya. But what to play next? We picked nine titles you'll want to check out—along with nine more that you should keep an eye out for. As for that little problem of maintaining a social life with all these games to play...well, you're on your own there, bub.



Jade Cocoon 2

Developer: Genki
Publisher: Ubi Soft

Release: December 2001

So this is one of those monster-breeding RPGs, eh?

Yeah, but this time the monster-breeding elements are better incorporated into the story and aren't nearly as boring as they were in the first game. The battle system, in which you put all of your furry creatures to work, is much better this time around, too. It's easy to cycle through functions—and having a whole posse of critters at your side, each with its own special techniques, gives the game a lot of strategy and depth.

Visual style The game's art style is a mix of the two previous games, with a focus on the more detailed, anime-like style of the first game.

The art direction looks great, too. There's a reason for that.

Popular Japanese anime artist Katsuya Kondou handled the art work for the game. Not familiar with that name? Well, he's the guy who worked on the Japanese animated films *Kiki's Delivery Service* and *Princess Mononoke*, among others.

Star Ocean 3

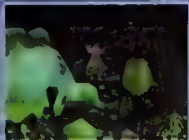
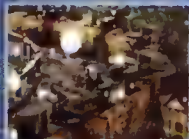
Developer: Tri-Ace
Publisher: Enix

Release: March 2002 (Japan), Fall 2002 (U.S.)

Star Time coming: Star Ocean 3!

Star Ocean 3 is the third game in the series, and it's the most ambitious yet. It's a 3D RPG with a focus on story and character development.

FFX's world. The two main characters in the game are a blond-haired boy by the name of Fate and a brunette called Sophia. Prepare for battle. From what we've seen so far, we're most excited about Star Ocean 3's amazing-looking battles. With sharply focused, quickly shifting camera angles and lots of fast-paced action combat, the battles look incredibly intense.



Suikoden III

Developer: Konami
Publisher: Konami

Release: December 2001

Talk about a major facelift! Featuring a visual style akin to Sega's *Eternal Arcadia* (you know, slightly super-deformed, anime-ish looking characters), *Suikoden III* marks a new direction for Konami's flagship RPG series. While the first two PS one *Suikoden* games featured traditional, realistic-looking charac-

Suikoden III has finally made the leap to 3D, allowing Konami to showcase more exciting story sequences and battles.

The only problem we've seen with the graphics so far though, has been a choppy framerate—but that may be just because the game was still early in its development.

Crossing paths? *Suikoden III* seems to be much like its predecessors in that you're required to play from the view points of different characters whose paths will eventually cross.

A cinematic affair? Battles once again allow you to use a party of up to six characters to attack enemies, but this time around the action seems to move a tad slower than in previous games due to a greater focus on magic and more animations during combat.



WELCOME TO MY WORLD



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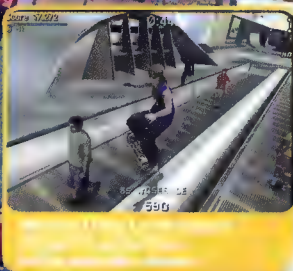
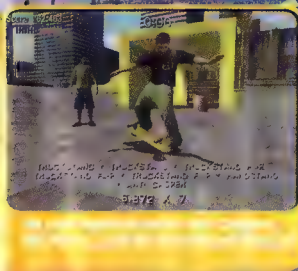


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SPIN



Tsugunai: Atonement

Developer: Cable Call

Publisher: Namco

Platform: PlayStation 2

Release Date: February 2002



Legia Dual Saga

Developer: Comix2

Publisher: Comix2

Platform: PlayStation 2

Release Date: February 2002



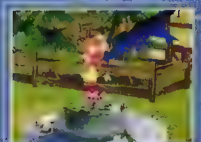
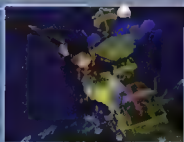
Grandia II

Developer: Comix2

Publisher: Comix2

Platform: PlayStation 2

Release Date: February 2002



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K



Kingdom Hearts

Developer: Square
Publisher: Square
Available: PS2, PC, GBA, DS, PSP, Wii, Xbox 360

The Kingdom Hearts series is a crossover of Disney and Square's Final Fantasy series.

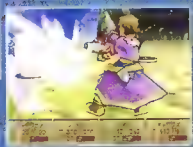


Art by: Square



Wild Arms 3

Developer: Core Design
Publisher: Sony
Available: PS2, PC, Xbox 360, PSP, Wii

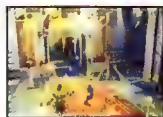


9 more to keep an eye out for...

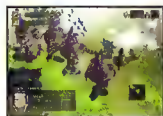
Skies of Arcadia - Sega has announced that it will port its flagship Dreamcast RPG to the PS2. Coming from the developers of the Phantasy Star series, this is one of the best RPGs out there



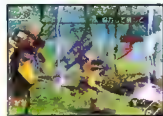
Forever Kingdom - Slated for release this winter is the sequel to Evergrace, renamed Forever Kingdom for the U.S. market. This one looks a bit better than the first game, thankfully.



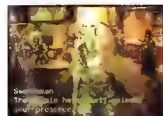
Hundred Swords - Another Sega role-playing game is now headed for the PS2, but this one is of the real-time strategy sort and is playable with up to four people online.



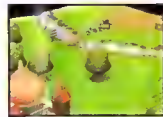
Fenshin Yanyan - Known as Hoshin Engi 2 in Japan, this nice-looking Koei RPG is being renamed to the equally awkward Fenshin Yanyan for the U.S. market



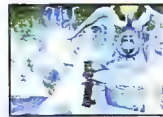
Wizardry - Previewed elsewhere this issue, this Attus RPG is about as old-school as it gets, based on a classic series that saw its heyday two decades ago. It may be dated, but Wizardry is also role-playing in its purest form.



RPG Maker - The first RPG Maker was a surprise success for Agetec, so the company is planning to bring over this PS2 version sometime next year. The graphics have been improved and the setup should be a lot more functional.



Grandia Extreme - Hitting Japan this winter is the third installment in the Grandia series. A much darker and stylized adventure, this one is being developed from the ground up for the PS2. Ubi Soft plans to bring the game out in the U.S. sometime next year.



Popolocrois - This rather cutesy cel-shaded RPG hits Japan this winter. Since Sony brought the quirky Okage: Shadow King over to the U.S., perhaps they'll eventually bring this one here too, especially considering how strangely addictive it is.



Shadow Hearts - If we didn't review Shadow Hearts this month, we'd have surely included the game among the top nine featured here. Be sure to check out our Reviews section for all the reasons why you should play this dark, unique and stylistic RPG.





PlayStation 2

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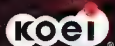


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POP MUSIC

Tokypop brings Final Fantasy and other big game soundtracks to the U.S.

Tokypop has long been known to release the occasional U.S. version of some of the biggest video game soundtracks, but with game music really beginning to catch on here, the company is ramping up its Soundtrax division, releasing both standard soundtracks and original compilations.

"As gaming matures, I think everyone agrees that game soundtracks have also matured," says Tokypop marketing manager Chad Benesh. But while soundtracks are already popular in Japan, they're largely overlooked here—in part because they're hard to find [only at import stores and via Web sites] and can be quite expensive. Now, though, "the market is becoming more and more aware of them," says Benesh. The Tokypop soundtracks all differ from the original Japanese soundtracks, though: On one hand, the track selection is limited for the U.S. release, but on the

other hand the price is significantly lower [most Tokypop tracks will sell for less than \$15, as opposed to the \$40 range that many bigger Japanese soundtracks fall into].

Leading the pack of new releases is a handful of Final Fantasy discs, including two original compilations *Final Fantasy N Generation*, a collection of music from FFI-VI, and *Final Fantasy S Generation*, which encompasses music from FFI-VII-IX. Both compilations are stunning

examples of the majesty of game music, especially when created by the very talented Final Fantasy composer Nobuo Uematsu. If you have any interest at all in game music, we highly recommend you pick up these two collections [but if you can only buy one, the *S Gen* album is the better of the two].

As for how these compilations were put together, Tokypop brand manager Ken Lee tells us it was a collaborative effort. "I made some requests to Square Sounds and Uematsu-san, and he took those into consideration," Lee says. "In the end, the final selection and choice was by Uematsu-san. What's really exciting about *FF N Generation* and *FF S Generation* is that all the music selections are taken from special acoustic, orchestral and/or remixed versions, which are even more stunning than the original in-game versions." We couldn't agree more.

Next up, of course, is the Final Fantasy X soundtrack, due out in January. Tokypop has also secured the rights to Onimusha and is working on several other major releases, according to Benesh. You can find these discs online at www.tokypop.com as well as at many game stores and select music stores.



(*WITH MOUSTACHES)

Yutaka Saito, more commonly known simply as Yoot, is no doubt one of the oddest characters in the gaming biz. Not afraid to speak his mind, Yoot loves to provoke reactions from people and just generally mess with their heads.

Previously known for his addictive puzzle games *Sim Tower* and *Yoot Tower* for the Mac and PC platforms, Saito recently made quite a splash with his virtual sea creature pet game *Seaman* for Sega's Dreamcast. Using a microphone peripheral, *Seaman* allows the player to speak and interact with a rather odd virtual life-form (partially modeled after Saito himself). Now the designer is hard at work on bringing his *Seaman* creation to the PS2.

Having spent much time at LSD guru Timothy Leary's house before he passed away, Yoot may very well have been influenced by the happenings there. Possible, yes—but we're betting the moustache has a lot more to do with his wackiness.



Yoot Saito

Games he's worked on: *Yoot Tower* (Mac), *Sim Tower* (PC), *Seaman* (Dreamcast)

Moustache Rating: 6.0

FALSE STARTS

From its earliest days, back in 1993, Crystal Dynamics established itself as a true next-gen developer, being one of the first companies out of the gate with a 32-bit game. The problem? Those first few titles (*Crash N Burn*, *Total Eclipse*) were for the doomed 3DO system! Later the company proved its mettle with two popular platforming series: the blazingly fast *Pandemonium* and the wise-cracking gecko-starring *Gex*. These days, *Crystal D* is best known for its *Soul Reaver*/*Blood Omen* series, which raised the bar for storytelling, atmosphere and voice-acting. But *Crystal D* hasn't just produced quality games. It, too, has shovelled out its fair share of crap. Here's a quick look at some of the company's other PlayStation titles. Know a developer you'd like to see featured here? Send it to us at opm@illfaw's.com with the subject FALSE STARTS.

Title	The Game	The Pros	The Cons
 Off-World Interceptor '95 1995	Race monster trucks equipped with weaponry in low-gravity environments on other planets.	A fast-paced racer with a twist. The game also has plenty of power-ups and level-based obstacles.	Choppy graphics and poorly controlled. The tracks are all too similar, quickly leading to boredom.
 Total Eclipse Turbo 1995	A space shooter that pits humans against a nasty alien race that's intent on wiping out mankind.	Impressive CG-rendered cinematics, sharp graphics, excellent sound and solid control.	Monotonous levels, poor variety of weapons, unconvincing enemies. Just not much fun.
 Blazing Dragons 1996	Not only was this one of the first 3D baseball games, but it also boasted some excellent motion-capturing of players.	At the time, this was one of the best-looking baseball games out there, with realistic details.	While it's got the real players, it doesn't have any official teams or stadiums. Also short on extras.
 Blazing Dragons 1996	A point-and-click graphic adventure set in medieval times, featuring dragons as the central characters.	Great voice-acting from Cheech Marin, Harry Shearer and Terry Jones. Lots of wacky humor.	Typical problems associated with this genre, like obtuse puzzles and random "hot spots."
 Blood Omen 1996	The game that kickstarted the <i>Soul Reaver</i> mythos. <i>Blood Omen</i> is a 2D action/RPG with a dark, mature storyline.	An enormous 100-hour quest, engrossing story, fantastic atmosphere and top-caliber voice-acting.	Much of that 100 hours is lost to devastatingly boring times. Guess some action's not for the faint-hearted.
 Soul Reaver 1996	Basically just an updated version of the 1995 3DO arcade basketball game of the same name.	Well, if you like Magic and Kareem (and who doesn't?), this game's got 'em.	Just a lack of any other real players and a very awkward camera make this one a flagrant foul.
 Soul Reaver 1996	Built using the <i>Gex</i> engine, <i>Alujik</i> is part platformer, part adventure, starring a voiceless magic-wielding archer.	A nice variety of moves, some interesting puzzle elements and endgame puzzles, and dynamic music.	<i>Alujik</i> takes itself too seriously and ends up being corny. The game play is just average.
 The Unholy War 1998	A mix of turn-based strategy and real-time fighting action. It plays like a modern update to that old classic <i>Archon</i> .	You can play the full strategy game or just brawl through the battles. A real blast with two players.	A weak solo experience—neither the strategy nor the arcade elements live up to their full potential.
Walt Disney World Quest Magical Racing Tour 1999	Yet another mediocre kart racer in an overly crowded world. This one is squarely aimed at the kids, though.	The Walt Disney World license and the relatively easy gameplay make it a solid choice for children.	No four-player mode, dull commentary and mediocre graphics. And where's Mickey, Donald or Goofy?!

PlayStation 2

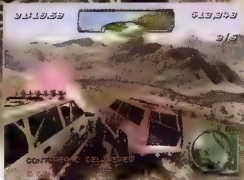


SMUGGLER'S RUN 2

HOSTILE TERRITORY

The ultimate off-road driving adventure returns to the PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system. Work for an elite band of smugglers delivering contraband, escaping the authorities and attacking rivals. Make the drop, hit the nitro boost and get across the border before all hell breaks loose!

OUT NOW!



Deliver the goods through mine fields, avalanches and enemy crossfire!



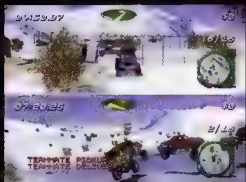
Fully integrated plot increases the adrenaline and ups the stakes



Race anywhere across the world's most dangerous territories



All new mission types including helicopter drop-offs!



Outrun and outwit your enemies head-to-head in split screen multiplayer model!

www.rockstargames.com/smugglersrun2



Violence

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MT. GARRICK, ONCE A PEACEFUL MOUNTAIN RETREAT, HAS BEEN MYSTERIOUSLY CLOSED DOWN BY THE IRON-FISTED CHIEF O'LEARY.

NAYA AND HER SNOWBOARDING COUNTERPARTS LEAD A RESISTANCE, LOOKING TO UNCOVER THE CONSPIRACY.

COMING SOON ON



Comic Mischief
Mild Language

RADICAL
ENTERTAINMENT™



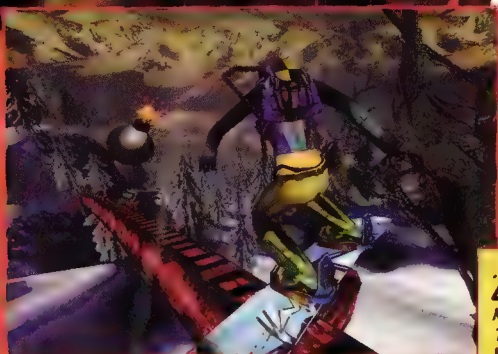


YOU FOOLS!
I GAVE STRICT ORDERS TO
KEEP ALL SNOWBOARDERS
OFF OF THE SUMMIT!

BOOM!!



NAYA HAS OTHER IDEAS. SHE KNOWS
SOMETHING BIG IS GOING ON UP THERE.
SHE FOUND AN **ARTILLERY CANNON**...



...AS WELL AS WHAT HAPPENED TO BE
UNASSEMBLED BOMB PARTS.
NAYA IS CERTAIN THAT THE CHIEF IS UP
TO NO GOOD AND IS READY TO DO
WHATEVER IT TAKES TO FOIL HIS PLANS.

YOU CAN'T
SHOOT WHAT
YOU CAN'T
CATCH! THE
CHIEF'S GONNA
BE SORRY WHEN
I GET UP TO
**THE
SUMMIT!**



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IT'S NOT WHAT
IT SEEMS.

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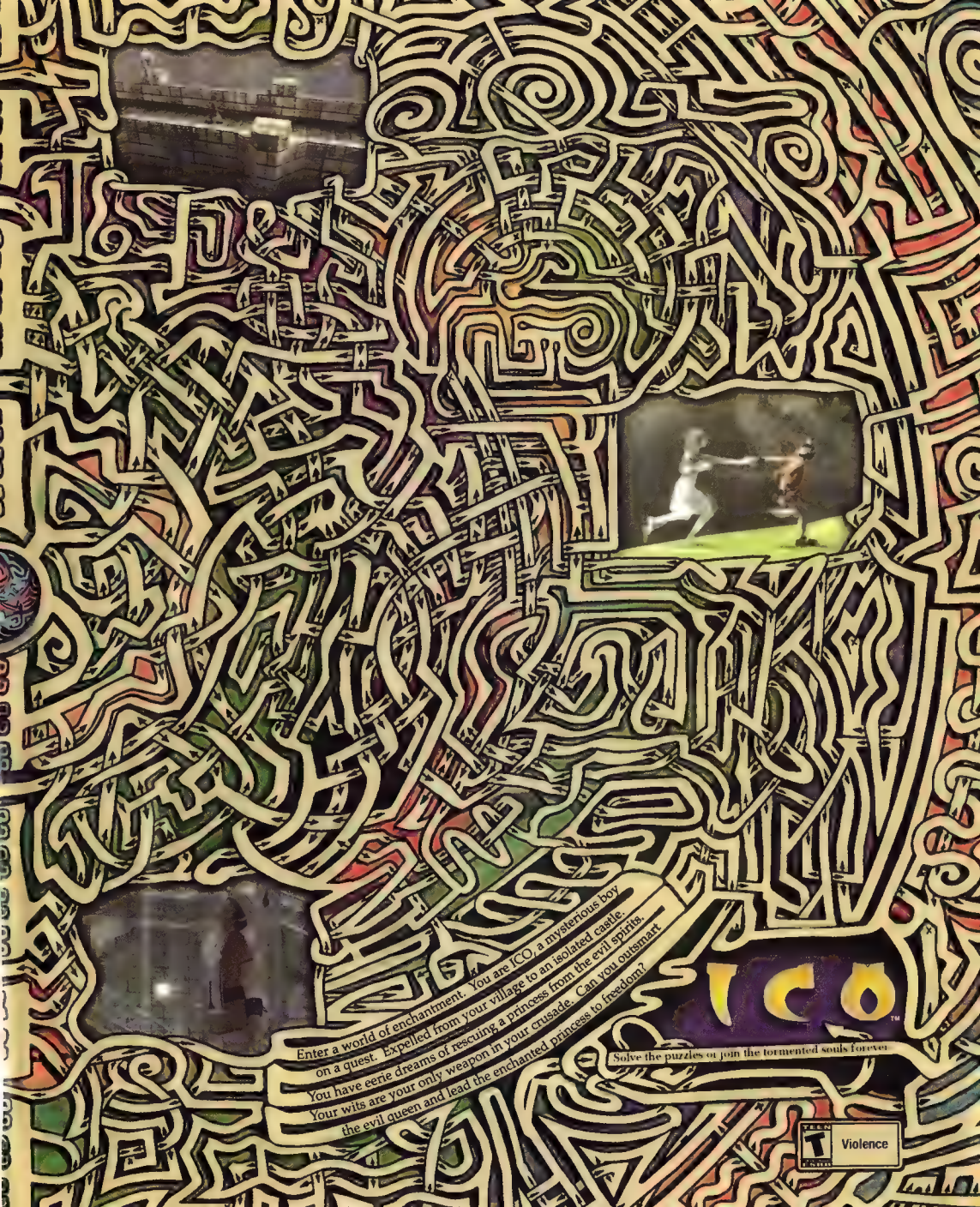


PlayStation®2

THQ
www.thq.com



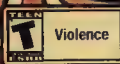
START



Enter a world of enchantment. You are ICO, a mysterious boy on a quest. Expelled from your village to an isolated castle. You have eerie dreams of rescuing a princess from the evil spirits. Your wits are your only weapon in your crusade. Can you outsmart the evil queen and lead the enchanted princess to freedom?

ICO™

Solve the puzzles or join the tormented souls forever



TIMELINE: Arc the Lad Collection

Sure, Arc the Lad Collection is now a year overdue. But in some ways, this massive box set from Working Designs is more like six years overdue—that is, if you count all the way back to when the first game was released in Japan. Following is a chronicle of the series' milestones leading up to its U.S. release.

Arc the Lad released in Japan. Developed by G-Craft (Front Mission/Super Nintendo), Arc is a strategy RPG that's somewhat short for its genre (about 10 hours) and clearly doesn't take advantage of the PlayStation's technical capabilities. Some speculate it never made it into the U.S. lineup solely because it was a 2D game. Hardcore gamers clamor for a U.S. release, but their voices go largely unheard.	6.30.95
PlayStation launches in America.	9.9.95
Beyond the Beyond released in the U.S. The first traditional RPG to hit the PlayStation, this Sony title is universally panned.	8.31.96
Arc the Lad II released in Japan. It includes the then-unique feature of importing your saved-game data from the first title (something that Suikoden II later offered). The game play has also evolved, with a longer quest, a bigger party and more side missions.	11.1.96
Suikoden released in the U.S. Despite being completely 2D, Konami's RPG gains a substantial cult following here.	12.28.96
Arc the Lad III released in Japan. The first in the series to go fully 3D, Arc III once again lets you use your saved-game data from the previous title to build up your characters. Speculation mounts about a possible U.S. release of this third installment, but no actual news emerges.	9.7.97 10.28.99
Final Fantasy VII released in the U.S. The massive success of Square's epic game pushes RPGs from niche genre to mainstream fare, paving the way for numerous other U.S. RPG releases.	9.7.97
Working Designs, a U.S. company known for its top-notch localizations of fanboy favorites, officially announces Arc the Lad Collection, which will include all three games, a soundtrack CD, a "making-of" CD, a hardcover manual, and plenty of extras. The game is set to release in November 2000.	1.26.00
November comes and goes, but no Arc the Lad Collection in stores—and no comment from Working Designs (which has a reputation for missing release dates). No one is surprised.	5.12.00
Second quarter 2001 passes, and still no Arc the Lad Collection. Again, no one is surprised.	11.00
Working Designs officially unveils the full package for Arc the Lad Collection. The six-CD set is stuffed with fanboy goodies, including 22 character mini-standees, a memory-card holder and controller thumb buttons. Anyone who preorders the package, priced at \$74.99, also gets a limited-edition pocket watch. Although retailers start taking preorders, Working Designs still hasn't set an exact release date.	7.01 9.26.01
E3 2000: The first game in Arc the Lad Collection is on display at Working Designs' booth. The company also announces that it's adding Arc the Lad Monster Arena to the collection. The games are still slated for a release later in the year.	5.19.01
E3 2001: Arc the Lad Collection is again on display at Working Designs' booth. The collection is said to be 80 percent complete and is set for a second quarter 2001 release. Also announced at E3: The soundtrack will no longer be included in the collection.	7.01



SNK R.I.P.

Japanese developer bows out of games industry

Quick, think of your favorite classic arcade games. Chances are, more than a few of them came from Japanese developer SNK. Samurai Shodown, Metal Slug, Fatal Fury, King of Fighters, Ikari Warriors—plenty of gaming's greatest moments can be attributed to this same developer. Which is why it was such a sad moment when, after 20 years in the business, SNK recently closed its doors.

Hit hard by the decline in the arcade market, not to mention the diminishing interest in 2D gaming, SNK was on the verge of bankruptcy for quite some time now. And recent attempts to salvage its business, such as partnering with Capcom for the Capcom vs. SNK series, were apparently not enough to satisfy the game maker's creditors.

As for those of you wondering what will happen to SNK's popular franchises, many of these have been sold off to other companies that have expressed interest in carrying them on. In fact, one Korean developer recently announced that it has obtained the rights to the Metal Slug series and is already hard at work on a fourth installment. It's also very likely that Capcom has purchased the rights to continue its Capcom vs. SNK franchise. But whether or not companies can maintain the high quality of

After the announcement of its closing, SNK sent out the following message to all of its fans. (The message came from Japan, and we're running it in unedited form.)

"Dear All SNK fans/customers, It is with deepest grief that In the Autumn of 2001, SNK will close the company history in its business. It was all of your favor and encouragement which made our passion running to make better games for SNK fans. We'd like to take this opportunity to thank and everyone of you for your continuous help and assistance rendered to SNK since its incorporation in Japan July in 1978. Without your support, SNK Corporation would not have been possible throughout 23 years of operation. With all our heart-felt gratitude, thank you once again!"

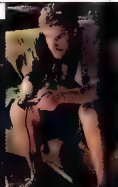
SNK's franchises remains to be seen.

The departure of SNK, once such an important force in the industry, is indeed a harsh blow. But here's hoping that its franchises fall into the right hands and that its staff of talented developers moves on to bigger and better things.

PLAYSTATION SIGHTINGS

Undeclared, Fox, aired 10/9/01

On a recent episode of Fox's hilarious new college-set comedy, *Undeclared*, Will Ferrell guest-starred as a speed-addicted professional term-paper writer (and not necessarily a good one) who spent his earnings on a new PS2—the perfect thing to keep him from doing his "job." Though Ferrell appears to play Kessen, the "ninja game" he describes, with its level-24 and evil enemy Yatzu, only helps reinforce the unwritten rule that in popular media no game can ever be described according to what it actually is. Speaking of which, have you seen anything PlayStation-related recently in TV shows, movies, music videos or elsewhere? If so, throw us an e-mail at opm@ziffdavis.com with a subject of SIGHTINGS.



Enemies have a lock on your tail,
you barrel roll at mach 2 and let 'em have it...
ARE YOU READY FOR THIS KIND OF ACTION?



PlayStation 2



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MITSUDA: XENO STAR

Say hello to the bright new talent who's taking over the video game music world

While plenty of gamers have heard of Final Fantasy composer Nobuo Uematsu (OK, maybe not "plenty"), most aren't yet familiar with Yasunori Mitsuda. But Mitsuda, who once worked under Uematsu, is quickly becoming the gaming world's most well-known musical star, due in no small part to his sublime soundtracks for Chrono Trigger and Xenogears. More recently, Mitsuda has contributed to the PS2 RPGs Shadow Hearts (reviewed this month) and Tsugunai. But his latest project, Xenosaga, may be his grandest project yet. We recently visited Mitsuda in his Tokyo studio to meet the man behind the music.

How did you end up being a video game composer?

I honestly never imagined I'd be doing this. I do play games, but I'm not really a hardcore gamer. My mentor in college just happened to be doing video game music and he heard of an opening at Square.

Did you know about Square?

I knew the name, but I didn't know Final Fantasy at all [laughs]. Actually, when Mr. Uematsu asked me if I played Square games, I said that I only played their PC stuff. Because of that I just assumed I wouldn't get the job, so I started to look elsewhere. Oddly enough, they hired me.

"I was even hospitalized while working on Xenogears."

Did you compose music right away?

No, I did things like sound effects for Final Fantasy V. After a few years of doing that stuff I just went up to Mr. Uematsu and flat-out said that I wasn't there to just work on sound effects. I said that if I couldn't write a song, I would quit [laughs]. It was unprecedented—at that time Square was starting to boom. No one in his right mind would want to leave. Thankfully, I got my way and they let me handle the music for Chrono Trigger. I felt so much pressure, though, and it led to ulcers. Mr. Uematsu provided some of the tracks for the game and it made me happy to be on the credits with him.

How did you come up with music for Xenogears?

We wanted to use vocals for the game, which was a first for Square. We wanted to do something different than FFVII. It took us two years to do it. Oh, and some people say that one track in the game sounds very similar to a track from the movie *Titanic*. It was composed before the movie came out, though. I actually made a point to highlight this on the CD by putting a composition date next to it in the track listing.

What'd you think of the outcome of Xenogears?

I thought I did pretty much everything I could do, and I had time to brush everything up. It was then that I decided to quit Square. It was good timing, I think. They just asked that I help make some music for them down the road, which I ended up doing a few years later with Chrono Cross.

And now you're working on Xenosaga.

Yes, and this time we want to do it more like the music for a movie rather than for a video game. It's big and orchestral—and just like in a movie, the soundtrack won't always play. There will be plenty of scenes, such as on the field map, where you'll only hear sound effects. We have music in places like the movie sequences, but it's used to help bring out emotion, like in films.

Have you ever composed a song while dreaming?

The song I wrote for when you travel to different locations in Chrono Trigger. I wrote that in my dream.

You wrote the entire track in your dream?

Yes. I myself am amazed by that. When I wake up the melody was still there. I did arrange it a little bit, but the melody itself was intact. When I'm working on a project, I often sleep in my chair in my studio. That way I can remember stuff right away and get right to work.

Which of your games was most memorable to work on?

Oh, that would be Chrono Trigger. Me and the director Masato Kato used to have big fights that were real memorable [laughs]. One time I literally threw a script book at him and yelled that we couldn't do the stupid scenario. Everyone on the floor popped their heads over their cubicle walls and stared. We had many fights but we are actually good friends.

Any advice for someone interested in music?

If you have something you are interested in, you should follow it through. It will come back to you later. You can't play with one toy for too long, but you can play with music your entire life. There are still so many things I don't know about music.

We've heard that you've worked so hard that you made yourself sick.

It happens every time I do music for a game. I was even hospitalized while working on Xenogears. It was from jaundice.

So you actually forgot to eat?

That, and stress. When I'm really into it, I don't want to go outside. I don't even want to go to the bathroom. I'll be holding it as long as I can. But when I get sick I start dreaming about things, and it means my engine is started. It's a good sign—and at the same time a good sign.



A few of Mitsuda's biggest hits (clockwise from top left): Chrono Cross, Tobal 1, Xenogears and Chrono Trigger.

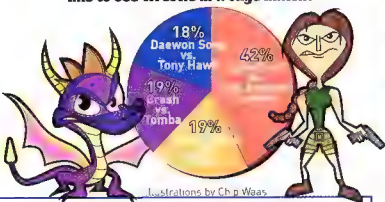


wounds
will
heal.



PLAYSTATION UNDERGROUND POLL

Which of these pairs would you most like to see wrestle in a cage match?



JOHN SCALZI CENSORSHIP IN THE ARCADES?

You folks are no doubt aware of the debate concerning violence and mature content in video games for the home. What you may not know is that the same debate goes on outside of the home as well—in arcades and other places video games are played. Late in October, the Supreme Court weighed in on the matter of video game censorship in arcades, and for now, at least, the Supreme Court is against it.

Here's what went down: The city of Indianapolis passed a law that barred minors from playing certain video games in arcades and other public places without the daily written consent of a parent or the actual presence of a parent nearby. These games included those that showed "realistic serious injury to a human or human-like being," including "amputation, decapitation, dismemberment, bloodshed, mutilation, maiming" or disfigurement. The U.S. appeals court in Chicago decided the law violated First Amendment protections and placed an injunction on its enforcement. Indianapolis appealed to the Supremes, who rejected the appeal without comment. (They can do that. They're the Supremes.) Indianapolis can try to recast the law to pass constitutional muster, but until they do, this is a dead law.

That's good news, in case you're wondering. Governmental censorship in any media, whether it's books or movies, music or video games, creates more problems than it solves. Yes, now this means that parents in Indianapolis will have to ask where their kids are going and what they're playing in the arcades. But you know, that's what parents should be doing anyway. Parenting is work. Deal with it.

This doesn't mean I believe that kids should be playing any bloody frag-fest; they can stuff a quarter into. Some of the ideas of that law would make for good voluntary standards—segregating the games with the most mature content into one area, for example, and asking for proof of age or parental consent before teens can play. Voluntary standards can work: Movie ratings are an example of this, as are ESRB ratings. If a movie theater or retailer can ask for ID before a kid sees an R-rated film or buys an R-rated game, an arcade can do the same before a kid drops money into its games. They should do this. If they don't, you can bet Indianapolis and other governments will try again with the censorship...and they probably won't stop at the arcades.

John Scalzi is a freelance writer and media critic who also runs GameDad, a video game site for parents. Visit it at www.gamedad.com.



NO HOLDS BARRED

Two new contenders fight for the title of ultimate brawler

In the world of wrestling there's always a battle brewing, but here's where things start to get interesting outside of the ring. Remember the original UFC title for the PS one? Not an awful game by any means, but one that was greatly overshadowed by its much better-playing Dreamcast counterpart. Well, aside from the obvious graphical differences, there was a reason for that. The PS one version came from a developer called Opus, while the Dreamcast version was handled by Anchor. Anchor's version of the UFC game was just more fun.

It's now a year later and Crave has begun to show off its

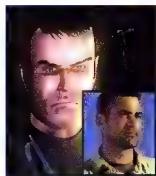
new PS2 UFC game, UFC: Throwdown (big screenshot, above). However, THQ has also just announced a UFC-style wrestling game of its own called Pride (inset screenshot).

Now, here's the interesting part. Crave's Throwdown is once again being developed by Opus, while THQ's Pride is being done by none other than... Anchor. THQ has essentially gone in and swooped up the former UFC masterminds and put them to work against their one-time partners. Dirty tactics? Perhaps—but this is down-and-dirty fighting we're talking about. Both titles release next year, so prepare for a super showdown.



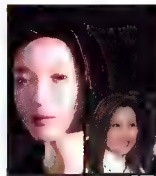
DREAM CAST *syphon filter*

Since 1999, Gabe Logan and Lian Xing have enthralled us in their epic struggle to halt the atrocities of the Syphon Filter virus through three action-packed games full of political intrigue and drama. Sounds like the perfect formula for a Hollywood blockbuster to us. So, as this issue's monthly Dream Cast, we present our picks for some of the more important characters in the film version of the Syphon Filter trilogy. Got any ideas for a Dream Cast of your own for another game? Send us your ideas at opm@ziffdavis.com with the subject of DREAM CAST.



Gabe Logan:
George Clooney

With similar roles in movies like *Three Kings* and *The Peacemaker*, George Clooney brings to the part a lot more than TV medical dramas and bad Batman flicks.



Lian Xing:
Michelle Yeoh

Lian Xing has proven herself to be one tough woman you don't want to mess with. So who better to play her than this star of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*?



Lawrence Mujari:
Samuel L. Jackson

Combine the smarts of his character in *Jurassic Park* with his ability to kick ass (so well demonstrated in *Pulp Fiction* and *Shaft*), and Samuel L. Jackson is perfect.



Mara Aramov:
Uma Thurman

Tall, sexy and lethal, you'll find no one better to portray this Russian assassin than Uma Thurman (*Pulp Fiction*, *Sweet and Lowdown*). (Besides, she needs work!)



Uri Gregorio: Jean Reno



Vincent Madden: Daniel Benzali



Maggie Powers: Natalie Portman

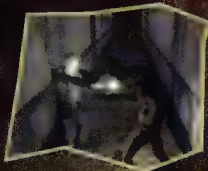


Erich Rhoemer: Laurence Fishburne



... *but*
your
mind
will be
scarred
forever.

SILENT HILL 2



Violence
Blood and Gore



PlayStation®2

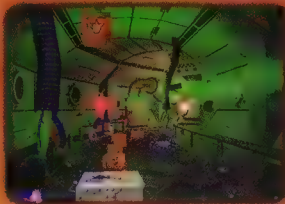
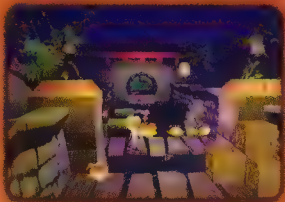
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PlayStation 2

IT'S CRASH'S TOUGHEST ADVENTURE YET.





The Bandicoot is back with
three brand new missions,
graphics and level additions
that will guarantee you'll
get The Wrath of Cortex's
game to beat this year
and days long hence.



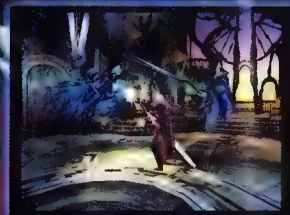
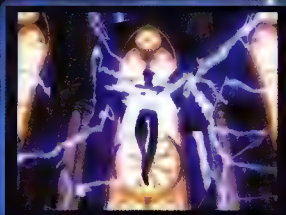
More Pain. More Game.

www.nintendo.com/crash

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THE DEVIL DOESN'T KNOW IT YET,
BUT THERE'S A BULLET
WITH HIS NAME ON IT.


"BY FAR the best action game
on PlayStation 2! 10 out of 10!"
-PSM



Blood
Violence



PlayStation 2



CENTS AGO, IN THE DARKEST REACHES OF HELL, A DEMON SWORDSMAN NAMED SPARDA
WAGED A ONE-MAN WAR TO SAVE THE HUMAN WORLD FROM DAMNATION. 2000 YEARS LATER,
A SHADOWY FIGURE NAMED DANTE FINDS CLUES THAT THE DEVIL WILL RISE UP AGAIN.
SOMEWHERE BETWEEN A MAN AND A DEMON LIES OUR ONLY HOPE FOR SALVATION.

Devil May Cry

FROM THE CREATORS OF "RESIDENT EVIL"

DEVILMAYCRY.COM



CAPCOM



Maximum Promotion

To help promote Maximo in Japan, Capcom has come up with this rather unique marketing campaign: Preorder the game and get a free pair of Maximo's heart-covered boxers.

WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO...

Gunslinger



Let's see, an action/RPG set in the Wild West. Sounds like an odd premise for a game, doesn't it? Perhaps—but for some reason or another, Gunslinger generated loads of interest when it was first announced in early 2000, before the PS2 was even launched in the U.S. Maybe it was because early screenshots of the game looked so promising, or maybe it was that its unique gameplay allowed players to choose whether they want to become a celebrated hero or a wanted outlaw depending on their actions. Whatever it was, Gunslinger sure struck a chord with a lot of you, as we've received tons of mail over the past few months asking what's happened to the game. And that's pretty significant, since Gunslinger hasn't been shown or talked about for over a year now—and it failed to even make an appearance at last year's Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3).

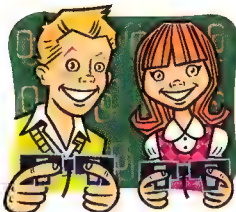
So what's become of Gunslinger? Well, as you may or may not remember, Activision was originally the publisher of the title. Not anymore, though. Earlier this year, the company decided that it would stick with its proven franchises (Tony Hawk, Spider-Man, etc.), rather than take a gamble on something as risky as a Western RPG, and so it decided to shop the game around to other publishers. Interestingly, Sony—which was already working with Gunslinger developer Surreal Software on Drakan: The Ancients' Gate—saw promise in the title and decided to pick it up to publish itself.

So where does the game stand now? As far as we know, it's still happening, although it won't see a release until summer 2002 at the earliest. Surreal's primary focus at the moment is finishing up Drakan: The Ancients' Gate for a winter release.

Wanna get the scoop on a game that's fallen off the radar? Then just send an e-mail to comcast@activision.com with the subject "What Ever Happened to..." and we'll look into it for you!

PLAYSTATION APTITUDE TEST

- How much did Naughty Dog (then called Jam Software) earn for its first published game?
 - \$80,000
 - \$15,000
 - \$5,000
 - \$250
- The Mayor of Jak's home village in Jak and Daxter is voiced by Bob Hastings. What is Hastings' most popular contemporary role?
 - Kain in the Legacy of Kain games
 - The cat on Sabrina the Teenage Witch
 - Commissioner James Gordon in the Batman cartoons
 - The MovieFone guy
- Who is the Sega mastermind behind Virtua Fighter 4?
 - Yu Toyota
 - Yu Suzuki
 - Yu Mitsuhashi
 - Yu Daihatsu
- Which pop star appears in Sega's Space Channel 5 games?
 - Britney Spears
 - Stephen Tyler
 - Eminem
 - Michael Jackson
- Shadow Hearts developer Sacnoth is responsible for which PS one RPG?
 - Legend of Dragoon
 - Koudelka
 - Eternal Eyes
 - Kartia
- What was the first Infogrames game released under the Atari label?
 - Splashdown
 - MX Rider
 - NASCAR Heat 2002
 - Looney Tunes: Sheep Ra der
- Which of these WWF "ladies" is noticeably absent from the SmackDown! Just Bring It lineup?
 - Trish Stratus
 - Chyna
 - Lita
 - Ivory
- Which of the following is not one of the mafiosi in Grand Theft Auto III?
 - Tony Cipriani
 - Joey Leone
 - Luigi Goterelli
 - Salvatore Spicolli
- Lucy Liu, who provides voice-overs for SSX Tricky, has not appeared in which of the following films?
 - Payback
 - Jerry Maguire
 - Tomorrow Never Dies
 - Shanghai Noon
- Which of these sports has Shaun Palmer (of Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder) not competed in?
 - Mountain Biking
 - Supercross
 - Surfing
 - Skiing



DATA STREAM

Optic Wakes It Up



Now Canadian developer Optic Interactive is hard at work on Pro Wakeboard 2002, which we're told will institute new gameplay concepts we've not yet seen in an extreme-sports title. Expect it this summer.

Rainbow Bought



Recently on fire with a bunch of PS2 hits (ATV Offroad Fury, Splashdown), Rainbow Studios has been bought by publisher THQ. Along with its other recent acquisition (Volition, working on Red Faction 2), THQ looks primed for lots of PS2 success down the road.

WWW.PENNY-ARCADE.COM

Kingdom Hearts triggers a flurry of other strange collaborations.

Mattel and Blizzard unite for World of Warcraft—seek out the magical Card of Endless Credit with your friends online in the first MMORPG. Guide Barbie, Skipper and their friends from Generation Girl through an expansive subterranean mall packed with vintage clothes, cute boys, and deadly Orcs.



Capcom Vs. Looney Tunes 2001: Looneygaddon. It's time to settle the score. It's an all-out slug-fest when two unlikely universes collide in this battle of epic proportions!



Look out, Cocomonst! There's a new mouse in town. Don Bluth joins forces with id Software to spawn The Ultimate Evil 3: Fievel Goes To Hell.



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EXCITING
PlayStation®2
games!**



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SEARS



SPIN

PLAYSTATION YEAR

3

Believe it or not, the PlayStation is now six years old. We look at the most significant events in each year.

At the tail end of 1996 Core Design and Eidos introduced the world to Lara Croft when it unleashed *Tomb Raider* to enthusiastic fans. Initially released for the Sega Saturn, the PlayStation and the PC, it gained momentum throughout the 1996 holidays and continued to grow in popularity throughout 1997 thanks to Lara's considerable appeal. And very large breasts, no doubt. By the time a sequel was announced, along with an agreement with Sony to keep Lara exclusive to the PlayStation (it was also on the PC—the Sony deal was just for consoles), Lara was appearing anywhere and everywhere. Few video game characters had captured the hearts of the world in quite the same way. There was talk of Lara toys, merchandise, T-shirts and even, quite

incredibly, a movie. At the time, the whole thing seemed unstoppable...who would have thought it would end up being milked so ludicrously hard in the years to come!

The Lara phenomenon wasn't the only major event of the

PlayStation's third year, though. The extreme-sports craze kicked off on Jan. 15 when 989 Sports released the reasonably well-executed and moderately well-received *Cool Boarders*. Little did we know that it would kickstart an entire genre of video games that would help drive sales of the PlayStation even higher.

1/31/97 FFVII HITS JAPAN

In Japan another world-changing phenomenon was taking place. On Jan. 31 *Final Fantasy VII* hit stores to a frenzied response. A U.S. release was still months away because of the extensive translation work required on the four-disc game, but anticipation was higher for FFVII than it was for anything else thus far. About one week later, the first of a flurry of idiotic questions asking whether you could revive Aeris hit the newsgroups and chat rooms. You CAN'T, OK? You just CAN'T. Now will you please DROP IT.

At the end of February Namco followed up the incredible *Tekken 2* with *Soul Blade*, a conversion of its popular arcade weapons-based fighter. Although not as successful as the *Tekken* series, hardcore gamers loved it—and bought enough copies that future sequels were assured.

On March 5 Square announced that it was setting up a huge studio in Hawaii to work on a number of projects. Initially the focus of the division would be the sequel

(to FFVII), but another "secret" project was rumored to be in the works. Although not announced for some time, the studio went on to be the main office for Square Pictures, which produced the recent box-office disaster *Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within*.

FOOTBALL SEASON

On Aug. 26 both 989 Studios' *GameDay 98* and EA Sports' *Madden NFL 98* hit stores and began a war that would continue for several years. These, of course, were the days when both franchises were worth their weight in gold and sports fans were polarized into two camps on who favored which game. Reviews were stellar for both titles and sales of both games helped drive PlayStation system sales throughout the football season.

The day after the football games arrived, Sony released the Dual Analog pad—some would argue as a response to Nintendo's analog-enabled N64 pad. Different from the now-ubiquitous Dual Shock, the pad proved incredibly popular, albeit short-lived.

NO, YOU CAN'T REVIVE HER

After a summer lull, we were treated to a fabulous fall and win-

ter for PlayStation, in early September *P.S.X.* magazine transformed into the *Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine*.

And scored massive sales thanks to its packed-in demo disc.

On Sept. 3, Square and Sony released *Final Fantasy VII* here and immediately set new sales records. It went on to be a record-breaking game and has now sold almost 9 million copies worldwide. As happened after the Japanese release, within days of the launch games began to ask if you could revive Aeris after she dies. Yes, it's sad. Yes, it's a defining moment in video games...but no, you can't revive her. So, uh, get over it already, OK?

After the emotional roller coaster served by Square, what we all needed on Sept. 19 was a good fart joke. *Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee* provided nicely in this department and won over gamers with its charming story, wit and gorgeous visuals. It's a shame the team sold out to Microsoft, isn't it? The *Oddworld* franchise is now an Xbox-exclusive.

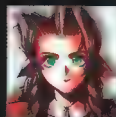
THEY KEEP GETTING BETTER

Early October saw the yet-to-be-topped *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night* arrive in stores. It didn't have fancy 3D graphics, it didn't do anything particularly flashy—but in terms of pure 2D platform/action gameplay, it rocked. It still remains one of the finest games on the system, and if you don't already

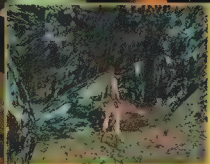
own it, you should do yourself a favor and buy it (it's on the Greatest Hits label now).

Come Nov. 22 it was time for that second *Tomb Raider* to be released, and with the sequel they got everything absolutely spot-on. The adventure flowed wonderfully, the graphics had been tweaked, and Lara was now becoming established as a bona fide pop-culture diva. *Tomb Raider 2* still stands as the best seller of the franchise, and rightly so. Makes you wish they'd have slowed things down a bit, huh?

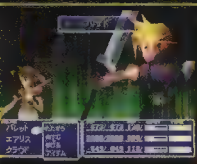
Next month: A new *Resident Evil*, the *Dual Shock* controller *Gran Turismo* and yet another *Tomb Raider*.



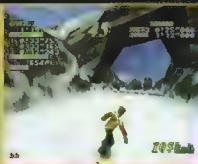
Aeris



Tomb Raider



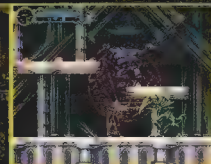
Final Fantasy VII



Cool Boarders



Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee



Castlevania: SOTN

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EACH SHALL RISE TO

Born of different worlds, woven together by fate,
each shall rise to face their destiny. Ryudo has been hired
to protect a young priestess who must participate in a ceremony to
halt the encroaching rebirth of Valmar, the God of Darkness.
Embroided between the forces of good and evil, Ryudo must follow
his destiny and save the people he detests so much.



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FACE THEIR DESTINY.

GRANDIATM

II

"The Dreamcast version of the game already rocks, so get ready for this one."

Official PlayStation Magazine



Over 1,000 characters to interact with in beautiful, varied environments.



Groundbreaking Battle System requiring tactics, skill, timing and technique.



Customize skills, spells, and special attacks with an amazingly flexible level advancement system.



PlayStation®2

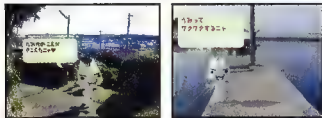


ONLY IN JAPAN

Toro Goes on Holiday
Sony CEI, PS2



You don't know Toro. And unless you're a Japanese gamer, you probably never will know Toro. But this little white cat is ridiculously popular in Japan, despite coming to fame in a game for Sony's PocketStation memory card/handheld game device (which never even made it over to the U.S.). You've got to be good to push the PocketStation, and Toro did just that: Debut title Doko Demo Issyo—a collection of minigames and virtual pets—sold over 1.1 million copies in the same country that brought us TamaGatchi. Of course, the PocketStation didn't last long, but Toro lived on in a cell-phone version of the game. Toro's latest outing is a bizarre PS2 romp that, as the creative title suggests, has you taking Toro on holiday set against photographic backgrounds of Japan. It's not all fun and games, though, as you have to teach Toro how to speak, by...speaking to him. How this works without a microphone remains to be seen, but Toro will apparently parrot back what he's learned. No word yet, though, on whether Sony has censored out naughty words (or, as we prefer to call it, the fun). Of course, holiday learning (which seems rather blasphemous, doesn't it?) isn't the only thing to do. Oh, no! You also get to talk to townspeople (with Toro), take pictures (of Toro), and even have dinner (with Toro).



PLAYSTATION'S MASCOT?

Despite having only two versions of Doko Demo Issyo to his name (for now, anyway), Toro is popular enough to have been chosen as the mascot for the PlayStation in Japan. Toro appears virtually everywhere where PlayStation is mentioned—marketing materials, commercials, even on billboards. Whereas in the U.S. Sony CEI has always been very adamant that the PlayStation doesn't have one true mascot, Sony CEI feels this friendly feline has just the right stuff to represent the gaming platform in Japan. In fact, you can't get very far at a Sony event without running into someone dressed in a Toro costume. Heck, Sony even went out of its way to throw an elaborate party to celebrate Toro's recent birthday!



Virtual Vixen: The sexy Agent Archer (above) is modeled after real-life actress Mitzi Martin.

MODEL CITIZEN

The heroine of No One Lives Forever is more than just a game designer's fantasy gal

Play enough video games and you'll begin to wonder if the designers live on some strange planet where there's no gravity and, in case of an emergency, the women have been genetically engineered to be used as flotation devices. But the female hero of No One Lives Forever doesn't come from some strange, buoyant world; she hails from our very own planet, Earth. Rather than create a woman out of their own sick minds, the developers of No One Lives Forever modeled their heroine, Agent Archer, after Mitzi Martin, a model and actress who's appeared in such films as *Dude, Where's My Car?* and *The Adventures of Joe Dirt*, as well as in commercials for Lubriderm, Miller Beer and American Express.

So how can I become a video game hero? Because I've been working out...

Well, you have to wait for a casting call. The guys at Fox had decided to model the character after a real person, so they held a casting call. And since they had an idea of who the character was, and I fit that image, I got the part.

How exactly did they model the character after you? Did they get some old guy with a measuring tape to do it?

No, they just took pictures. First they photo-imaged my face, taking pictures from the front and the side and so on, and then the designers created the character's face from the photographs. They did a pretty good job. I didn't expect it to look like me, but it does.

What about the character's body?

They took that from the pictures as well. The computer image is very small, obviously, so they didn't need my exact sizes; they

just needed to make it proportional, so they based it on other pictures they had taken.

Were you at all worried that they would do something weird with the body, like give you character huge boobs?

That was one of my concerns—that she was going to be one of these out-of-proportion characters like in *Tomb Raider*. In fact, I specifically asked about the breasts because that's kind of a weird thing to have done to you. But when I sat down with the guys from Fox Interactive, one of the first things they said to me was that they actually wanted the character to be realistic.

You're an actress and model, which means you must get hit on all the time. Are you prepared to be hit on because you're a video game character?

The people at Fox asked me that same question. I am prepared for it to happen, but I don't know how I'm going to feel when it does because it's weird to be hit on as a computer character.

Are you into video games yourself?

I don't know very much about them, but I have nieces and nephews who are.

They must've been psyched when you told them you're going to be a video game hero. Actually, they didn't believe me. I kept telling them I'm going to be in this game, but they were just like, "Yeah, right."

If they make No One Lives Forever into a movie, do you automatically get the role? There's a movie clause in the contract, but it doesn't guarantee I'd get the part. Like every other actress, I'd have to audition. Though, as you know, I have a bit of an advantage.

—Paul Sernell

DATA STREAM

Dinos Strike Back



Capcom is currently working on a new PS2 light-gun shooter called *Gun Survivor 3: Dino Crisis*. Featuring a new sniper mode and lots of angry dinos to fend off, the game should hit the U.S. next year.

Virtual Assassin



EA is working on *Hitman 2* for the PS2, a sequel to its hit PC game in which you take on the role of an assassin who has to wack a bunch of high-profile underworld officials. Look for it next spring.

Sims Come Home



Hinted at in the past by Clish, EA is now officially working on a version of the popular family simulation game *The Sims* for the PS2. Look for it next fall.

PS2 Alpine Skiing



Namco is working on a PS2 port of its upcoming arcade skiing game *Alpine Racer 3*, due out next summer. The game features courses modeled from actual satellite data.

The Place to Be

Celebrating in style for PS2's birthday

What: Invitation-only, one-year anniversary party for PlayStation 2, thrown by Sony Computer Entertainment of America.

Celebrity Guests: Courtney Cox Arquette and David Arquette, Rebecca Romijn-Stamos, Patricia Arquette, Emilie de Ravin, Seann William Scott, Tobey Maguire, Kirsten Dunst, Tara Reid, Crispin Glover, David Spade, Aaron Eckhart, Leonardo DiCaprio, Bill Maher, Fred Durst, Kevin James, Hugh Hefner, Andrew Keegan, Chris Klein, Jennifer Gimenez, Chris Masterson, Alicia Keys and many more.

When and Where: Oct. 18, at the St. Regis Hotel in Century City, Calif., where the entire basement was converted into game rooms and lounge space. Along with the copious amounts of booze and grub, the PS2 kept people entertained with *Gran Turismo 3*, *Jak and Daxter*, *Frequency*, *James Bond In Agent Under Fire*, *NBA Street* and more. In the ballroom, soul diva Alicia Keys performed an energetic set to an enthralled crowd.

Moments: The afterparty, at which particularly hardy folks continued to dance and drink until 5 a.m.; *OPM's* Zoe Flower was one of the few to survive this long. David Arquette, in a questionable choice of sport coat (see photo, far right), really digging *NBA Street*. EA's "Bond Girls" lolling about on a big white faux-fur rug in just their underwear (along with a suitably dumfounded representative not knowing whether to avert his eyes). Fred Durst, arriving fashionably very late. Leonardo DiCaprio, Tobey Maguire and Kirsten Dunst lying on beds playing games together while staring into the ceiling-mounted flat-panel TVs.

5 MILLION REASONS TO CELEBRATE

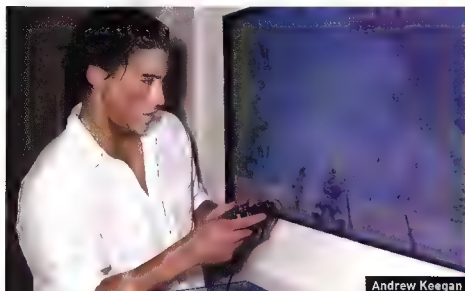
- Number of PS2s sold in North America since the Oct. 26, 2000, launch: 5 million.
- Number of units shipped: 8.6 million.
- Estimated number of PS2s sold by the end of Sony's 2002 fiscal year (March 31, 2002): 7 million in North America, 20 million worldwide (although sources at Sony are optimistic that they'll sell more than the official estimates!).



Jennifer Gimenez



Courtney and David Arquette



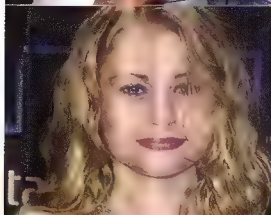
Andrew Keegan



TOP 10 BEST-SELLING FIRST-YEAR PS2 GAMES

Game Name	Publisher	Rating
1 Madden NFL 2001	EA	●●●●●
2 Gran Turismo 3: A-spec	Sony	●●●●●
3 Madden NFL 2002	EA	●●●●●
4 Tekken Tag Tournament	Namco	●●●●●
5 SSX	EA Big	●●●●●
6 NBA Street	EA Big	●●●●●
7 Onimusha: Warlords	Capcom	●●●●●
8 NBA Live 2001	EA	●●●●●
9 Midnight Club	Rockstar	●●●●●
10 ATV Offroad Fury	Sony	●●●●●

SOURCE: NPD TEST'S VIDEO GAMES DIVISION



OVERHEARD

"I've only ever played Nintendo. Whoops! I said the N-word!"

—Emilie de Ravin (from UPN's *Roswell*) overheard at the Sony party sushi bar



Hef and friends



Patricia Arquette and Rebecca Romijn-Stamos

(celebrity photos left to right: DeGuire/WireImage, Weeks/AP, DeGuire/WireImage, Raha/AP, DeGuire/WireImage, Weeks/AP, DeGuire/WireImage)

Clish MacLaver's GOSSIP GOSSIP

Gossip, rumor and scandal.
Gaming's biggest secrets dug up
and served with gravy.

Now that all of this year's big games are out, it's time to turn our attention to the big stuff for 2002. I've been partying like a maniac lately, with charity dinners, holiday bashes and drinking binges all attended by the game industry's elite (and me). At these debauched events up and down the Left Coast, high-level execs have felt the need to divulge all kinds of groovy tidbits, while others have simply felt that they can seduce me. You want the juicy stuff that no one else knows about? Well, here's some of it. Watch out for more gossip soon when I start my regular appearances on the new Web site www.gamers.com in our near future.

GRAND THEFT AUTO 4

If you've already played all the way through to the end of GTA3, you'll no doubt have already guessed this, but it's safe to say that the enormous success of the game has all but assured the possibility of a sequel. I don't have any solid info yet, but based on rumors I've heard, I'd expect to see a move away from Liberty City and a new collection of reprobates and gangsters brought into the mix. Now that the technology which made GTA3 possible is established, I hear that building a new story around

the same system will be comparatively simple. When can we expect it? My best guess would be a year from now.

GAME, SET, AND MATCH TO SEGA?

You may have been able to tell already from the escalating ad battle, but EA Sports and Sega Sports are clearly gunning for each other. Despite going head to head in just about every area, I heard this month that one sport EA won't be touching is tennis. Why? I'm not entirely sure, but given the quality of Sega's Virtua Tennis on the Dreamcast, we can rest assured that its upcoming Tennis 2K2 (with the lovely Williams sisters as cover stars) will be an absolute gem—so much so that maybe EA Sports has been scared off?

GAMES ON THE TUBE

TV studio execs seem to have a new passion: video game shows. No doubt spurred on by business analysts declaring video games "recession-proof," along with the immense success of the PS2 and the recent launch of two new systems, gaming is "where it's

at." If your cable service carries the somewhat-obscure Discovery Science channel, you'll no doubt already be enjoying the whimsical Canadian dailies of the *Electric Playground* folks. For next year there are rumors of a new show on the Sci-Fi Channel, more games coverage on Fox Sports, and a 24-hour gaming channel hitting cable boxes before the summer. Maybe this is my chance to become rich and famous? What do you think? Can a Scottish-American become a household name?

MORE GT CONCEPTS

If you check out the PS2 previews this month, you'll see screens from the fabulously funky-looking Gran Turismo Concept game. This early build features some oddities that only real car loons like Davison will get off on. No word on a U.S. release yet, but

ideas we had we couldn't include in Tekken 4. We have plans to use the 3D arenas in more interesting ways, and you will see some of that realized in the next update in the series."

ANYONE STILL CARE ABOUT MORTAL KOMBAT?

Gone are the days when slapping the Mortal Kombat banner on anything would make it sell. Politicians still use it as a whipping boy for video game violence, but I'm starting to think that Sen. Lieberman is the only person who remembers the game these days. This isn't stopping Midway from working on a new game for PS2, though. Undeterred by the upcoming onslaught of new fighting games, members of the original team are soldiering away on something that I hear has a lot in common with Tekken and



E-MAIL ME!

Got some good gaming gossip? Or anything you want to say to me? If you hear anything juicy, or get your hands on some cool screens or pictures, send me an e-mail at the following address: clishmacLaver@ziffdavis.com

there's a team at Square beavering away on a new Final Fantasy Tactics for PS2. All

"Expect to see a move away from Liberty City and a new collection of reprobates and gangsters."

BITS AND BOBS

Expect to see new information emerging about the new Lara Croft game in the next month or so. With *Soul* and *Reaver 2* being a PS2 exclusive, I would expect to hear news of a similar arrangement being made around *Tomb Raider*. Rumors persist about the motorcycle variant of *Gran Turismo*, although word has it that the project has been pushed back till 2003. Dark *Cloud 2* could be with us by next September, I hear. Let's hope so. Still no word on *Devil Never Cry/Devil May Cry 2*, but I understand that a story has already been hashed out and preliminary work is under way. Rumors persist that the new *Contra* game will be previewed early next year. Watch for the sequel to *No One Lives Forever* to hit the PS2 far more quickly than the first one did.

I've heard that more versions are on the way in Japan. Word has it that marquee-specific versions of *Gran Turismo* could be available as soon as next year, with both Honda and Nissan said to be very interested in working with Yamauchi and his team on producing something that features historic "classics" as well as future concepts. The Mk 1 Civic and the 2003 NSX in the same game? Japanese car fans will wet themselves.

TEKKEN 5 ALREADY?

Tekken 4 isn't out yet, and hasn't even been shown to the public in anything other than arcade form, but Namco head honcho Hajime Nakatani is already talking about doing another one. In a recent interview with *Computer & Video Games* in the U.K., he was quoted as saying, "there were many

Soul Calibur. Imagine a great-looking 3D fighter with all the range-weapons that you associate with Raiden and Chums. The rumors indicate that the game will boast an impressive roster of characters, possibly in excess of 20! Don't expect the new game to feature a number in the title...my bet is a Twisted Metal-style return to form. Mortal Kombat: Black? Nah...but you get my drift.

MORE TACTICS AT LAST

This one's been brewing for a while—you could argue that it was simply inevitable—but

together now. "Yay! C'mon, More! Louder! As far as I'm aware, the title isn't Final Fantasy Tactics 2, but it will bear some kind of subtitle instead. As is typical for the FF world, though, it's unlikely that any scenarios or characters from the previous game will make an appearance. One rumor I've heard is that the team may be bringing in characters from previous Final Fantasy adventures, as they're doing with Kingdom Hearts. An army with Vivi, Cloud, Tidus and Squall, perhaps?



PlayStation 2



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PlayStation 2



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PlayStation.2





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SUPERCADÉ A visual history of the videogame age 1971-1984



Of all the video game books out there (and there's been a bit of a rush on them lately), *Supercade* (MLT Press) is by far the heaviest tome of the lot. It's a big, fat and enthusiastic chronology of all those games that don't look half as good as you remember them looking. The slick production and fantastic screenshots are a real trip down memory lane for anyone who spent any time between 1971 and 1984 enjoying the delights of games like *Space Invaders*, *Joust* or *Phoenix*.

Boasting contributions from a variety of industry stalwarts including "father of video games" Ralph Baer, Leonard Herman, author of the oft-quoted *Phoenix: The Fall and Rise of Videogames*, Steve Kent, author of the recently released *Ultimate History of Video Games*, along with some weirdo named Todd Zuniga. *OPM* columnist Ryan Lockhart also makes an appearance in the book, featured alongside a very large dog with floppy ears.

As works of gaming nostalgia go, this is certainly the classiest. While other books have more studiously accounted the politics of the industry, *Supercade* focuses on the games and the experiences themselves.

Sound Station

By John Scalzi

Yeah, the water in *Splashdown* sure does look great, but don't let it distract you from the solid, diverse soundtrack. Check out this selection of albums from artists featured in the game.



The Donnas: *The Donnas Turn 21* Lookout! Records

The Donnas are a quartet of female rockers who play fast, three-chord songs about getting trashed, playing dive bars, and fooling around in a distinctly third-base-and-stealing-home sort of way. If this were 1978, the Donnas would become cult icons (in fact, they'd be the Runaways, which spawned both Joan Jett and Lita Ford), but it's 2001, and the Donnas are mostly just an amusing but ultimately marginal time at the CD player. But hey—great cover of Judas Priest's "Living After Midnight."

Final Score ●●●



Smash Mouth: *Astro Lounge* Interscope Records

Frankly, I was astounded when "All Star" became a hit. Didn't Smash Mouth know they were supposed to have been a one-hit wonder? Guess I was wrong: "All Star" is still maddeningly ubiquitous years after it was released, and the rest of the hit-packed *Astro Lounge* is infected with that same gloss of sunny, happy California punk pop that you either give into or go insane trying to escape from. I gave in. I don't really have time to go insane anymore. I'm on deadline!

Final Score ●●●●



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DVD News

REVISIONIST STUPIDITY:

The good news is that *E.T. the Extra Terrestrial*, 20th Anniversary Special Edition will arrive on DVD next summer. The bad news: There will be a new director's cut of the film with new digitally enhanced special effects, along with "political correctness" changes. One change that we're aware of is a revisionist slap in the face. At one point in the film there are FBI agents carrying guns. But not in the altered version! Now they're carrying walkie-talkies! Thanks, Spielberg. The new generation can take comfort knowing that America's FBI force wouldn't bother bringing guns if there were an alien loose in our boundaries. Good call, Steven.



LORD OF THE RUSH HOUR?

It's been confirmed by thedigitals.com that the two most recent *Lord of the Rings* trailers are hidden on the *Rush Hour 2* Infratime Edition DVD. We're also sad to confirm that Frodo and Bilbo will not be kicking Chris Tucker's ass in *Mordor*.

THE WEIGHT OF TIME

For fans of *Groundhog Day* who have yet to buy the DVD, hold on a touch longer! On Jan. 29 a new special edition of the film will be released and feature some worthwhile extras. There will be audio commentary with director Harold Ramis, the new documentary "The Weight of Time" and filmographies.

YOU, TOO?

If you're a follower of U2, it's been announced that the first-ever U2 DVD is out for world consumption! *U2: Elevation Tour 2001—Live from Boston* includes 19 tracks, multiple angles of that dreamy Bono fellow on select songs, "The Making Of The Filming Of" and "Road Movie" featurettes. It's a whopping two-disc set.

BATMAN CAN

Yes, yes, animated *Batman* is on the way. *Batman: Subzero*, the original, unedited *Batman Beyond: Return of the Joker*, and *Batman: The Animated Series* and *The Batman/Superman Movie* are all slated to hit stores sometime next year.

HAPPY "ANNIVERSARY"

For fans of independent films: the recent hit, *The Anniversary*. Party, from co-writers/directors/actors Jennifer Jason Leigh and Alan Cummings will make it to the DVD shelves on Jan. 15. It will feature commentary with Leigh and Cummings, the Sundance Channel documentary "Anatomy Of A Scene," the trailer and DVD-ROM extras like the complete screenplay.

DVD Reviews

by John Scalzi



PEARL HARBOR: 60TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE SET

STARRING:

(Ben Affleck, Josh Hartnett)

AMERICAN OUTLAWS: SE (Kathy Bates, Timothy Dalton)

Well, here's a Western in the (ugh) tradition of *Young Guns*—that is to say, a bunch of young, temporarily hot actors dotted up in chaps with nowhere to go, and nothing to do once they get there. Three reasons to see the film: Oscar winner Kathy Bates gets blown up (a metaphor for her career), former Bond Timothy Dalton wishing he was with Kathy Bates when she went up, and then there's Ali Larter, who looks nice in Western gear. Otherwise, there are 70 years of great Westerns; rent one of

them instead. DVD Extras: director commentary, four featurettes, the screenplay and storyboards.

Movie Score ●●
DVD Extras Score ●●●●

BILL AND TED'S BOGUS JOURNEY

(Keanu Reeves, Alex Winter)
The second of the "Bill & Ted" films (the first, *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure*, also comes out this month) is the better of the two, and is the highest expression of the "two stupid guys"

film genre, most recently celebrated in *Dude, Where's My Car?*. Bogus has a strange idiot-savant literacy—any film that can reference both glam-band Poison and Swedish-film giant Ingmar Bergman has something going on under the hood. And then there's Keanu, with his perfect distillation of genial morosicism. Is it method acting? Let's hope so. Same DVD extras, though: just one "making-of" featurette and a trailer. Bogus!

Movie Score ●●●●
DVD Extras Score ●

EVOLUTION: SE

(David Duchovny, Julianne Moore)

Director Ivan Reitman looks to see if he's got any of that *Ghostbusters* magic left, and the answer is: Uh, no. But it's not a horribly bad waste of a couple of hours. David Duchovny is a disgraced scientist who discovers life on a fallen meteorite; it quickly adapts and threatens to take over the world, or at least to stuff movie co-star Orlando Jones into its space anus. Julianne Moore is here, too, and I bet she's still wondering why. Don't confuse this with real science, or a real good movie, and everything will be fine. Extras include several deleted scenes, an interview with Reitman, and making-of features.

Movie Score ●●●
DVD Extras Score ●●●●

GHOSTS OF MARS: SE

(Natasha Henstridge, Ice Cube)

Hey, did you know that director John Carpenter still had a career? I know, I'm surprised, too! But this isn't such a bad flick at all—Natasha Henstridge [you know her as "the chick from *Species*"] and Ice Cube team up on the planet Mars to fight zombies possessed by alien ghosts. Or something. Whatever, there's lots of act on and stuff blowing up, and of course, that chick from *Species*. Great for cooling off after a tough game of Red Faction. Extras include commentary from Carpenter and Henstridge, effects deconstructions and a video diary.

Movie Score ●●●
DVD Extras Score ●●●●

HEDWIG AND THE

ANGRY INCH: SE

(John Cameron-Mitchell)

Yes, yes, I hear what you're saying. "Oh, God, not another musica. about a man whose botched sex-change operation leads him/her/it to become

an embittered and angry punk rocker!" But that's Hollywood for you. No originality at all. Seriously, you'll probably see this flick on some of the cooler "Top 10" lists this year—it's got great original music, a freakish but captivating and sympathetic lead character, and the sort of "who gives a damn?" style that exemplifies punk and makes for an interesting time on the DVD. Not your usual flick. Extras are cool, too, a feature-length documentary on the progression of the story from play to film, a "Select-a-Song" feature and DVD-ROM extras.

Movie Score ●●●●
DVD Extras Score ●●●●

HAMLET

(Campbell Scott, Lisa Gay Hamilton)

This version of *Hamlet* is, like, the 12,000th filmed version to come out in the last few years (it is actually the second version in the last year, the first being the one starring Ethan Hawke and Julia Stiles). But it has some interesting stylistic touches that make it notable, not the least of which is that Ophelia and her family are African-Americans, and the setting is the post-Civil War South. What does it all mean? Got me; people are always messing with the play like this. But Campbell Scott is one fine Hamlet. This is the fifth *Hamlet* on DVD I know of—mix and match! Extras are sparse: just some behind-the-scenes footage.

Movie Score ●●●●
DVD Extras Score ●

MOULIN ROUGE: SE

(Nicole Kidman, Ewan McGregor)

Apparently, over at Cannes, people were having fistfights over whether this was a brilliant, postmodern musical, or just director Baz Luhrmann wiggling out with other people's money. I tend more toward the former, though I can see the other argument as well. I mean, this thing is

waaaaaay over the top: Nicole Kidman and Ewan McGregor as star-crossed lovers in turn-of-the-century Paris, belting out medleys of hits from the '70s, '80s, and '90s. Makes no sense whatsoever, but it works. And you can't argue with that. Fabulous extras: two commentary tracks, oodles of "making" featurettes, re-edited dance scenes, multi-angle dance scenes, a live rendition of "Lady Marmalade" and more. Yow.

Movie Score ●●●●
DVD Extras Score ●●●●●

SCARY MOVIE 2: SE

(Marlon Wayans, James Woods)

I'd personally rather suck on a Liquid Plum'r popsicle than to torment myself with the alleged humor to be found in this, but I will allow that *Scary Movie 2*, like its predecessor, is largely "critic proof"—it does no good to point out that it's sad and unfunny because people who like this stuff simply don't care. So, you know, if you want to see it, knock yourself out DVD extras: deleted scenes, "making-of" featurette, DVD-ROM extras and a screenplay window [what for?].

Movie Score ●●
DVD Extras Score ●●●

TWIN PEAKS: FIRST SEASON

(Kyle MacLachlan, Lara Flynn Boyle)

The perfect holiday gift for the Geek Who Has Everything: the first land, who's kidding who?—the only watchable season of the freakiest prime-time show ever. Kyle MacLachlan stars as a zen FBI agent, trying to find out who killed Laura Palmer and why. You come for David Lynch's twisted take on small-town life, but you stay for the pie. Director commentaries, cast interviews and fanzine archives are among the DVD extras.

Movie Score ●●●●
DVD Extras Score ●●●●



Ho Hum, More Dinosaurs

TAKING EFFECTS FOR GRANTED

I saw the first *Jurassic Park* for the first time in 1993 at Universal Studios, in a screening theater the movie company has on its lot. It was set up with all the digital bells and whistles, and I and about 200 other critics dropped our jaws when the first dinosaurs trotted on the screen. Then came the infamous T-Rex chase scene, and the critic I was sitting next to bruised my arm, she was clenching it so tight. It was, literally, a gripping movie experience. Fast-forward to 2001, when digital effects are the norm. *JPTIII* comes out, I'm watching another T-Rex mudwrestle with a Spinosaurus (even bigger and meaner than it), and part of me is thinking: Did I leave my car lights on? This is how we become jaded to movie magic.

It's really too bad, because objectively, *JPTIII* is a snappy, well-paced film, and miles better than *The Lost World*. That one suffered from Spielberg Sequelitis, which dictates that any sequel directed by Spielberg is invariably mean-spirited and not much fun (see also: *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*). This one gets around the problem by switching directors (it falls to Joe Johnston, of *Jumanji* fame) and by keeping things lean and focused on two things only:

Getting humans near the dinosaurs, and then making them run away fast before they get eaten. Oh, they try throwing other stuff in—some junk about an estranged couple (Tea Leoni and William H. Macy) trying to save their marooned son with the help of original *JP* hero Alan Grant (Sam Neill)—but you can ignore all that.

DVD Extras: audio commentary and a bunch of special-effects features, including a visit to Industrial Light and Magic, a "making of" feature, and "turntables" starring your favorite dinosaurs.

DVD Releases

11/27/2001

Moscow on the Hudson
Willow: SE

12/4/2001

Almost Famous/Untitled:
The Bootleg Cut
America Outlaws: SE
Ghosts of Mars: SE
Mixed Nuts
Pearl Harbor
Pearl Harbor: 60th Anniv.
Commemorative Ed.
Pearl Harbor: 60th Anniv.
Comm. Gift Set

12/11/2001

Jurassic Park III: CE
Jurassic Park Trilogy
Mists of Avalon
Rush Hour 2
Sahara

12/18/2001

Motorama
Moulin Rouge: SE
The Princess Diaries
Scary Movie 2

12/26/2001

Evolution



Clockwise: *Jurassic Park 3*, *Ghosts of Mars*, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, *Scary Movie 2*, *Evolution*, *Moulin Rouge*



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HOLLYWOOD BANTER

Hollywood goes superhero crazy this month, and PlayStation games are sure to follow

SPIDER-MAN TRILOGY

Both Sony and Sam Raimi are said to be feeling pretty good about the potential for a sequel to their coming Spider-Man movie, which is due to hit theaters in May 2002. According to *Variety*, Sony and Raimi reportedly have already begun preparations to fast-track a sequel, as early reactions to both the scripts and early cuts of the movie have been so favorable. The paper also notes that both Tobey Maguire and Kirsten Dunst have option deals for two sequels—so a trilogy seems extremely likely. You can't just have a single superhero flick when an entire trilogy is possible, can you?

www.variety.com

BANA IS BANNER

Last month we told you that Australian actor Eric Bana (you may have seen him in *Romper Stomper*...or maybe not) was in talks to star as Bruce Banner in Ang Lee's upcoming *The Incredible Hulk*. Since then, this has been confirmed, and Bana's deal includes a possible pair of sequels should the movie perform well. What else would you expect? Shooting on the film will start in March 2002, and then a long period of post-production begins, as the massive amount of computer graphics work is done. Contrary to some reports online, Lee still hasn't decided if the Hulk himself will be a big dude painted green or a highly advanced CG model. Expect to see details of a Universal Interactive-produced game based on the movie late next year.

X-MEN 2 SCRIPT FINISHED

David "voice of Solid Snake" Hayter and Bryan Singer reportedly have completed their work on the script for *X-Men 2*, and every single actor needed to begin production has now signed on to start shooting in early 2002. The story is said to pick up where the last movie left off, with Wolverine searching the icy wastes for clues to his past. Poor Hugh Jackman will have to grow that silly facial hair again. Watch for Gambit and Beast to make their appearances this time.

BATMAN DISASTERS

The Coming Soon Web site reported last month that many of the proposed Batman movie projects have hit walls for a variety of reasons. The much-ballyhooed *Batman Beyond*, for instance, has been put on indefinite hold, as it was deemed to be too expensive because of the futuristic setting. Yeah,

OK. Whatever. *Batman: Year One*, meanwhile, which was to be directed by professional weirdo Darren Aronofsky, is still scriptless with writers said to be tearing up everything they've done so far and starting again. May we suggest reading the graphic novel for an idea on how to proceed? The prospect of a Superman and Batman flick, to be written by Andrew Kevin Walker and directed by Wolfgang Peterson, is said to be in jeopardy, with the only feedback we've received being that it's in "development hell" right now.

On a positive note, the Catwoman movie, starring the delicious Ashley Judd, is still in development at Warner Bros. Although it breaks the mold somewhat in terms of story (Catwoman's alter ego is called Patience Price), screenwriter John Rogers is reportedly pleased with the second draft of his script.

www.comingsoon.com

SUPERMAN NOT DEAD

Rumor has it that *Charlie's Angels* director Joseph McGinty Nichol has signed on to direct the much-anticipated new Superman movie. Contrary to other reports, the flick definitely won't be based on the new TV show *Smallville*, nor will it deal with the death of Superman, as Tim Burton's adaptation was said to have done. Still no word on who will suit up as Supes, although we're fairly positive that Nic Cage no longer has an interest in the part. Our bet is on someone young and fairly unknown. Girl readers will be sad to hear that it probably won't be Dean Cain.

JUDGE DREDD IS BACK

Fans of the British comic book sensation *Judge Dredd* will be pleased about the franchise's new lease on life. According to *Variety*, 2000 AD has signed with Shoreline Entertainment for two movies. The first will be called *Judge Dredd: Dredd Reckoning*, which focuses on the title character as he comes to grips with his losing confidence in a corrupt legal system.

The second project has the title *Judge Dredd: Possession*, which, if it happens, would bring the popular bad-guy character Judge Death to the screen. The story finds Dredd facing the moral dilemma of whether or not he should kill a friend who is possessed by Judge Death, a being who comes from another dimension where it's illegal to be alive.

While talking to the trade, Shoreline big shot Morris Ruskin gave his take on the property, saying, "We are reinventing the franchise by taking it back to the edge and style of the original comic book." Hopefully this means it won't be anything like the awful Stallone vehicle from 1995.

Ruskin's partner, Vicki Pilke, adds, "This is a great time for movies about superheroes, and there are thousands of *Judge Dredd* stories, so there is endless material available to work with. It will also be easier to brand the movies by presenting them back-to-back."

MATRIX 3

Number two is called *Matrix Reloaded* and number three is *Matrix Revolutions*. Now you know. It's not out for a couple of years...but the trilogy is getting closer and closer to completion.

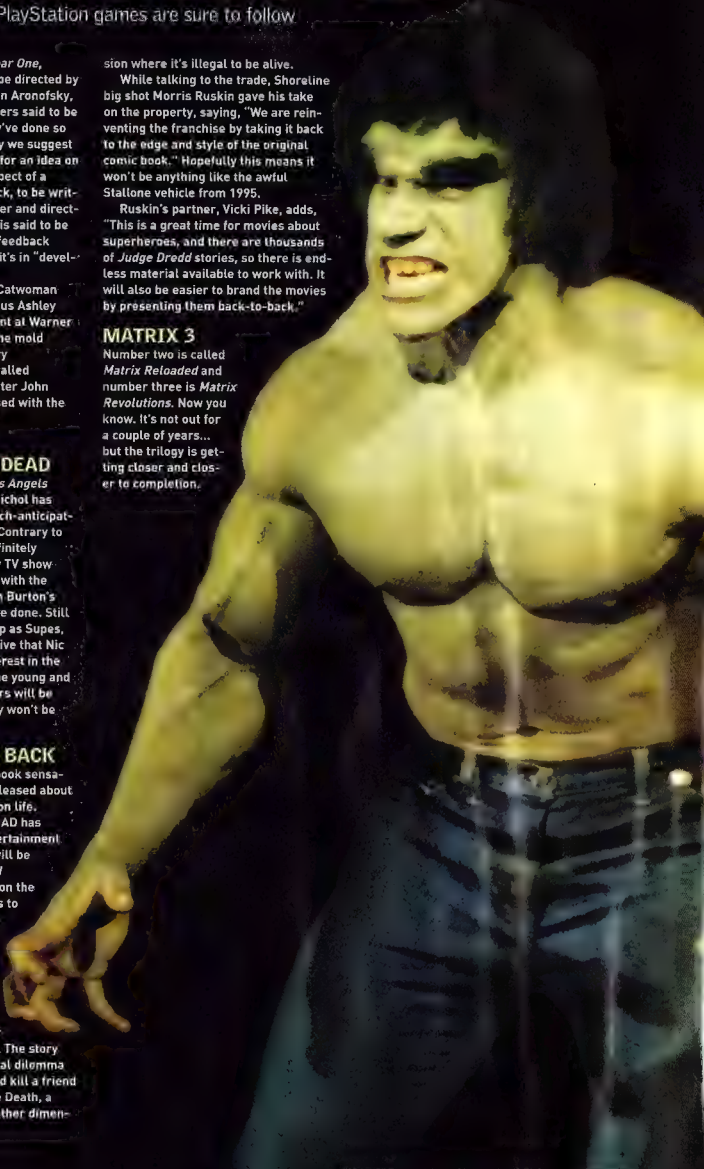
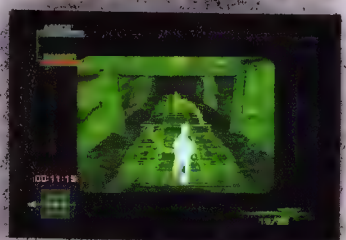
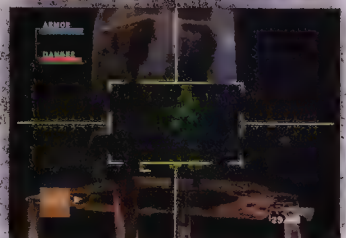
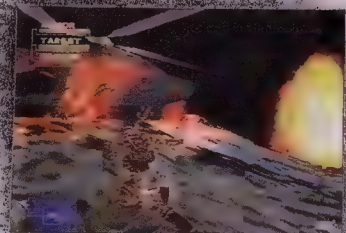


photo courtesy of Jerry Ohlinger's Movie Material Store, Inc.



Classified Information: Security clearance required. [REDACTED] The ultimate, espionage super agent Gabe Logan is back. [REDACTED] mission: clear name, [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

eradicate the Syphon Filter virus. [REDACTED] Discover man in shadows. [REDACTED] Blast through 19 intense, action-packed levels [REDACTED] exotic, international locales: [REDACTED] Costa Rica, Tokyo, South Africa [REDACTED] Ireland, [REDACTED] Australia [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Do not negotiate [REDACTED] Proceed with extreme caution. Maintain cover at all [REDACTED] times. Contact key intelligence personnel. [REDACTED] Move through multiple obstacles. Maximum strategy advised.

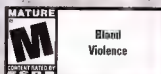
Utilize lethal [REDACTED] arsenal: X-ray gun, M-16, proximity mines, [REDACTED] nightvision rifle, [REDACTED] taser, tear gas gun, sniper rifle, crossbow, grenade launcher, concealed sub-machine gun [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Failure is not an option. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] password: virus [REDACTED]

Syphon Filter 3



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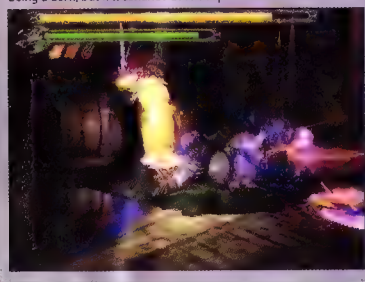
TOP 10 CHARTS

PS2 Top 10

Gran Turismo 3 has started its descent from the top five, but it'll hang around for a year or so. Next month, you can expect the top of this chart to be shaken up when many wise people open up their wallets for Grand Theft Auto III, Metal Gear Solid 2 and SSX Tricky.

Last Month	Title / Publisher	Rating
------------	-------------------	--------

- 1 — Devil May Cry
Capcom
- Devil May Cry dethrones Madden 2002 after just one month? Impressive. That's what "cool" does for a game. After all, this is considered one of the "coolest" games on the PS2. So, from now on, when you refer to DMC, always follow with air quotes saying how "cool" it is, that it's the "coolest." You'll get a reputation for being a dork, but it'll continue DMC's rep as "cool."



- 2 1 Madden NFL 2002
EA Sports
- 3 — Spy Hunter
Midway
- 4 — Silent Hill 2
Konami
- 5 — NHL 2002
EA Sports
- 6 4 NCAA Football 2002
EA Sports
- 7 7 Batman: Vengeance
Ubi Soft
- 8 — NASCAR Thunder 2002
EA Sports
- 9 5 Gran Turismo 3: A-spec
Sony CEA
- 10 — Time Crisis 2
Namco

OPM's Most Wanted PS2 Games

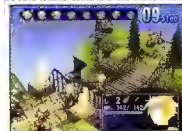


- 1 Final Fantasy X Square EA
- 2 Soul Calibur 2 Namco
- 3 Maximo Capcom
- 4 NBA 2K2 Sega Sports
- 5 TimeSplitters 2 Eidos
- 6 Max Payne Rockstar
- 7 Drakken Ancients' Gate Sony CEA
- 8 MofH, Frontline EA Games
- 9 Grandia II Ubi Soft
- 10 Need for Speed: HP2 EA Games

Japan's Top 10 PS2 and PS one Games

- 1 Pach-Slot Ju-Oh (PS2) Sammy
- 2 Dynasty Warriors 3 (PS2) Koei
- 3 Winning Eleven 5 (PS2) Konami
- 4 The Bike Race (PS1) Bandai
- 5 Time Crisis 2 (PS2) Namco
- 6 Tetris (PS1) Success
- 7 Pachinko Paradise (PS2) Irem
- 8 Brave Music (PS2) Sony CEI
- 9 Ray Storm/Crisis (PS1) D3
- 10 Hot Shots Golf 3 (PS2) Sony CEI

OPM's Most Wanted PS one Games



- 1 Hoshigami Atlus
- 2 Harry Potter EA Games
- 3 Mega Man X6 Capcom
- 4 Worms World Party Eon Digital
- 5 NHL FaceOff 2002 y89 Sports
- 6 Planet of the Apes Ubi Soft
- 7 Dragon Warrior IV Enix
- 8 Hidden & Dangerous Take 2
- 9 Dodgeball Agelec
- 10 Creatures Conspiracy

Top 10 Selling Games, All Systems

- 1 Devil May Cry (PS2) Capcom
- 2 Madden 2002 (PS2) EA Sports
- 3 Spy Hunter (PS2) Midway
- 4 Silent Hill 2 (PS2) Konami
- 5 Pokémon: Crystal (GBC) Nintendo
- 6 NFL 2K2 (DC) Sega Sports
- 7 Mario Kart: Circ. (GBA) Nintendo
- 8 Super Mario Adv. (GBA) Nintendo
- 9 NHL 2002 (PS2) EA Sports
- 10 Tony Hawk 2 (PS one) Activision

PS one Top 10

When the PS one offers slim pickings on the new-release shelf, why not hit up the classics? Besides Castlemania Chronicles and SpongeBob, this is all stuff that's been on the charts before. We're guessing that THPS3 will make a grand debut next month.

Last Month	Title / Publisher	Rating
------------	-------------------	--------

- 1 3 Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2
Activision
- This game bounces all around this chart. From month to month we don't know if it will hit No. 1 again, or if it'll hang on by the hair of Tony Hawk's chinny-chin. What we do know: People are buying it and people are loving it. We're still wondering how the PS one faithful will like the third incarnation. And is there enough Tony love to sustain two spots on the charts? Time will tell, we suppose.



- 2 2 Driver 2
Sony CEA
- 3 — Castlemania Chronicles
Konami
- 4 6 Madden NFL 2002
Sony CEA
- 5 — SpongeBob SquarePants
THQ
- 6 4 Gran Turismo 2
Sony CEA
- 7 5 Spyro: Year of the Dragon
Sony CEA
- 8 — Spider-Man
Activision
- 9 7 Syphon Filter 2
y89 Studios
- 10 6 Final Fantasy Tactics
Sony CEA

Source: NPD TRIST Video Games Service, mid-October 2001. Call them at 516-625-2481 for questions about this list. No games for competing console systems (e.g., N64, Dreamcast) were included. Overall sales figures may vary. Game descriptions written by the OPM staff.

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Coming Soon

December

Alina Psychoball	ATA	Pinball
Dragon Rage	3DO	Action
ESPN NBA 2knight 2002	Konami	Sports
Forever Kingdom	Agetec	RPG
Goat Simulator Force	3DO	Action
Grandia II	Cave	RPG
Hidden Invasion	Conspiracy	RPG
Jade Cocoon 2	Ubisoft	RPG
Jak and Daxter TPL	Sony CEA	Action
Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius	THQ	Action
Jimmy Neutron: Med Trib	3DO	X-Sports
The Legend of Alam Dar	Ubisoft	RPG
NBA 2K2	Sega	Sports
NFL Blitz 2002	Midway	Sports
NFL GameDay 2002	Sony CEA	Sports
NHL FaceOff 2002	Sony CEA	Sports
Tetris Worlds	THQ	Puzzle
Tsugunai: Monement	Atllus	RPG
Wizardry: Forsaken Land	Atllus	RPG

January

Cassini: Peace	Rockstar	Casino
Deus Ex: The Conspiracy	Eidos	TPS/RPG
Downforce	Titus	Racing
Drakan: The Ancients' Gate	Sony CEA	Adv
Evil Twin	Ubisoft	Action
Final Fantasy X	Square	RPG
Gitaroo Man	Koei	Rhythm
Hot Shots Golf 3	Sony CEA	Sports
Hype: The Time Quest	Ubisoft	RPG
The Last	Crave	Adv
Maximo: Ghosts to Glory	Capcom	Action
NBA ShootOut 2002	Sony CEA	Sports
PaRappa the Rapper 2	Sony CEA	Rhythm
Rez	Sega	Rhythm
Shadow Man: Zeon's Com.	Accaim	Adv
Shifters	3DO	Action
Sail Lake 2002	Eidos	Sports
Star Wars: Racer II	LucasArts	Racing
State of Emergency	Rockstar	Action

February

Aliens: Colonial Marines	EA Games	Action
Barbarian	Titus	Fighting
Blood Omen 2	Eidos	Adv
Brinny's Dance Beat	THQ	Rhythm
Commandos 2	Eidos	Strategy
MS Gundam: Zeonic Front	Bandai	RPG
No One Lives Forever	Sierra	FPS
Pirates of Skull Cove	EA Games	Action
Run Like Hell	Interplay	Action
Star Trek: Shattered Universe	Interplay	Fighting
Top Angel	Xicat	Fighting
Trophy Bass	Sierra	Fishing
USHR: Monster Jam	Ubisoft	Racing
Virtua Fighter 4	Sega	Fighting

March

Air Ranger	bandai	Flight S/m
E.O.E.: Eve of Extinction	bandai	Fighting

King's Field IV	Agetec	RPG
Prizm: The Dark Unicorn	TDK	RPG
Rayman Arena	Ubisoft	Action
SOCOM: US Navy SEALs	Sony CEA	Action
Star Wars: Jedi Starfighter	LucasArts	Shooter
Test Drive	Infogrames	Racing
Transworld Surf	Infogrames	X-Sports
The Weakest Link	Activision	Trivia
World of Outlaws	Infogrames	Racing

Future Releases

Alone in the Dark: TNN	Infogrames	Adv
Conflict: Zone	Ubisoft	Strategy
Defender	Midway	Action
Duke Nukem Forever	Rockstar	FPS
EA Sports Supercross	EA Sports	Racing
Ecco the Dolphin	Sega	Action
Endgame	Empire	Light Gun
E.T. Return/Green Planet	NewKido	Adv
Final Fantasy XI	Square EA	RPG
Freaky Flyers	Midway	Racing
Grandia Extreme	Ubisoft	RPG
H2Overdrive	Cave	Racing
Jurassic Park: Survival	Universal	Action
Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer	Activision	X-Sports
Kingdom Hearts	Square EA	RPG
Legend of Excalibur	Midway	Strategy
Looney Tunes: Space Race	Infogrames	Racing
Metal of Honor: Frontline	EA Games	FPS
Mike Tyson Boxing	Codemasters	Sports
Mortal Kombat	Midway	Fighting
MotoGP 2	Namco	Racing
Namco Museum	Namco	Collection
Need for Speed HP2	EA Games	Racing
NV Race	TBA	Racing
On muska, Warlords 2	Capcom	Adv
Ozzy's Black Skies	TBA	Shooter
Pac-Man World 2	Namco	Action
Power Pro Tennis: WTA Ed	Konami	Sports
Pro Wakeboard 2002	TBA	X-Sports
Project 0	Tecmo	Adv
Resident Evil: Survivor 2	Capcom	Light Gun
Robocop	TPS	FPS
Robotech	TDK	Action
Rude Tube	Interplay	Action
Sled Storm 2	EA Sports	Racing
Space Channel 5	Sega	Rhythm
Space Channel 5 Part 2	Sega	Rhythm
Star Ocean 3	Enix	RPG
Stuntman	Infogrames	Action
Suikoden III	Konami	RPG
Tekken 4	Namco	Fighting
Tenchu 3	Adv	Adv
The Terminator	Infogrames	Action
The Thing	Universal	Adv
TimeSplitters 2	Eidos	FPS
Tiny Toons: ACME Invasions	Conspiracy	Action
Wild Arms 3	Sony CEA	RPG
World Sports Cars	Empire	Racing

Final Fantasy X

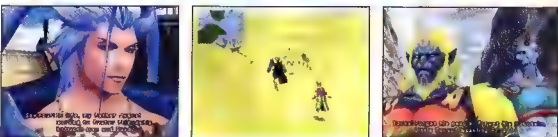
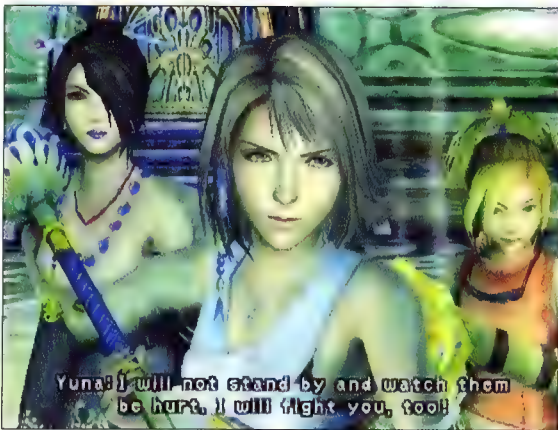
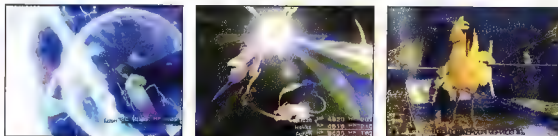
**HANDS-ON
PREVIEW**

The long, cruel wait is nearly over

Go ahead and cross Final Fantasy X off your holiday shopping list—it won't hit store shelves until January. Don't worry, that's probably a good thing. With all the other great titles shipping before the year's end, you'll be glad to wait until the new year to give your undivided attention to Square's mammoth RPG. Series creator Hironobu Sakaguchi has been busy with the FF movie and Final Fantasy XI Online for the last few years, so the reigns of FFX were handed over to a staff composed of FFVII and VIII team members. However, don't expect a graphically enhanced refresh of those games. Sporting a skin-baring tropical style, a cheeky jock for a hero and a highly unconventional storyline, FFX breaks away from its predecessors in nearly every way.

What's different in Final Fantasy X? Just about everything has been totally renovated, from the battle system to the graphical engine. The standard Active Time Battle setup used by every FF since IV is history. In its place is the Count-Down Battle System, a less frantic and more strategic method of combat that offers depth and complexity while keeping the fights fast and entertaining. Amazing polygonal landscapes replace the flat, boring backdrops of the PS one FF games, bringing the world of Spira to life in vibrant 3D. Even the method of storytelling has been transformed, as the game's text is now fully spoken by actors. But don't worry about clumsily delivered lines by erstwhile janitors and waitresses in this game—Square went all out with real actors and a professional voiceover studio, and the quality is apparent.

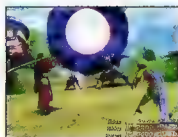
After a few minor missteps in 2001 like *The Bouncer* and *The Spirits Within*, FFX will likely remind everyone why they all adored Square (and FF) in the first place. Once again, lovable characters, engaging battles, unbelievable graphics and a lengthy quest combine to create the consummate RPG experience. Plus, with the specter of a massively multiplayer Final Fantasy on the horizon, this may be the last traditional FF that we get for a while. So be sure to savor it.





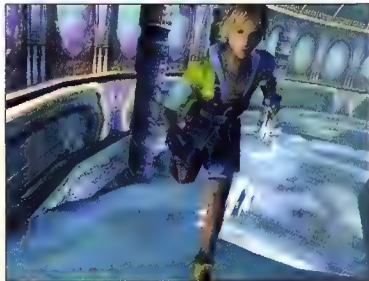
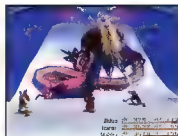
Fantastic Watersports

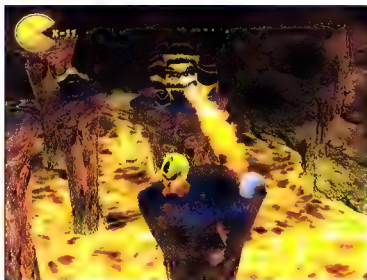
Leave it to Square to bring together the seemingly irreconcilable worlds of RPGs and sports games with Final Fantasy X's main minigame, Blitzball. Imagine a mix of soccer and football that's played entirely underwater and you've got a good idea of what this fantasy sport is like. But don't worry about not having the right skills: Playing Blitzball doesn't require sports-sim reflexes, as turn-based menus control the passing, blocking and shooting. Basically, if you can win a battle in FFX, you can play ball. Along with just being fun, you can win stuff by excelling at Blitzball. Certain secret items can be found only by winning, and Blitzing is the key to unlocking all of Wakka's Overdrive moves. So when do you get to play? After your first hands-on match (about five hours into the game), you'll have the option to Blitzball at any save point. Meanwhile, you should always be on the lookout for new team recruits when exploring different towns.



Foreign Language Requirement

In the land of Spira, two different languages are spoken—English and Al Behd, a somewhat Slavic-sounding tongue. Tidus learns to decipher Al Behd by locating 26 different primers scattered throughout the world, one for each letter of the alphabet. Letters that you know will then show up in the Al Behd subtitles as red, so eventually, you'll be able to understand what's being said.





Pac-Man World 2

The first Pac-Man World pleasantly surprised us, as **Namco's** grand-father of gaming icons (still looking mighty young on his 20th anniversary) set foot on an on-rails adventure replete with platforming elements (jumps, butt-bounces, etc.), ghosts and Power Pellets. Look for **spring's** sequel to broaden his world to full 3D with much of the core gameplay still intact. One cool new addition: The dot-gobbler can collect fruits, blending them into a cool, satisfying smoothie.



Mike Tyson Boxing

Is Mike Tyson still a marketable commodity? **Codemasters** seems to think so, as it uses its license to bring him to PS2 this **April**, hoping he can still knock out the competition. It all starts with create a boxer. From there, you can select your own themes, taunts and knockout moves en route to challenging top contenders and earning purse money and title belts. The more success you have, the more stuff you unlock. At the end of the fistcuffs rainbow: a tete-a-tete with Tyson.

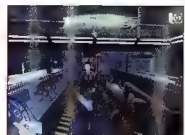
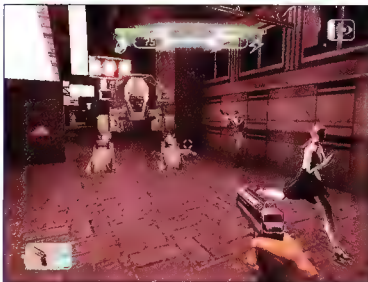
Deus Ex: The Conspiracy

Spector speaks

PC gamers know of *Deus Ex* as one of 2000's finest games—and probably one of the best ever. In **January**, the PS2 welcomes a port of the revolutionary title. Recently, Warren Spector, the mastermind behind the entire *Eidos* endeavor, spoke out about bringing the game to the console.

"Trust me when I say a lot of people thought we were insane when we embarked on that project!" Spector enthuses. "Now that we're in the closing days of the project, I'm happy to report that...we didn't have to make any significant compromises. Not only did the team manage to bring over every location, every character, every line of dialogue, every character-development option, every conspiratorial plot twist, and every genre-bending playstyle choice and problem-solving option, but we were able to make some enhancements to the original game." These include improved graphics, new cutscenes and better music made possible through a full-blown orchestra. Spector also boasts intuitive, fully functional controller compatibility.

"But all of that is just gravy," he continues. "What about the gameplay? Well, that's the coolest thing of all. The gameplay is all there. *Deus Ex* was, in a lot of ways, unlike any game anyone had ever played on a PC, and it's equally unlike any game anyone's played on a console. *Deus Ex* is a unique combination of first-person shooter, stealth game, adventure game and role-playing game [it even includes some strategy elements!]. It's all about player expression and player choice: What kind of character do you want to create? How do you want to solve the problems? Are you a fighter, a stealthy guy, a hacker, a talker or some combination of those? *Deus Ex* allows you to decide all that. And we made no compromises in bringing that idea to PS2.



Preorder Watch

STORE	PRE-ORDER	PRICE	SHIP DATE
Amazon.com	Y	\$49.99	1/18/02
Best.com	Y	\$48.99	1/15/02
EBgames.com	Y	\$49.99	1/15/02
Eidos.com	Y	\$49.99	Winter
GameStop.com	Y	\$49.99	12/3/02

all data as of 11/6/01



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Tekken 4

Already arcade perfect

While Sega's Virtua Fighter 4 has overshadowed the arcade version of Tekken 4 in Japan, the rest of the world knows a completely different story. In the U.S. especially, Tekken's fanbase is big as ever, and anticipation runs high for the PS2 home console port.

Namco already has the game running nicely on a development PS2 with, due to memory constraints, only the sound missing from the demo we tried. Of course, much code optimization is needed to get the arcade game running perfectly on PS2, as the coin-op runs on the souped-up PS2-based System 246 arcade board. However, the past has shown that the Tekken team, led by Masahiro Kimoto, has never delivered a less than an arcade-perfect home conversion. In fact, they're often better.

The quality of the PS2 version is already evident with all the graphical details from the coin-op in place. The characters look as superb on a TV as they did in Tekken Tag, but the improved animation is very noticeable. The background interaction elements also work perfectly on the PS2 version.

Namco remains mum on any additions it has in store for Tekken 4 on PS2, but you can count on plenty of those when it ships this **spring**

**HANDS-ON
PREVIEW**



Merchandise!

Although you won't be able to get your hands on the PS2 game until spring, Tekken 4 posters and T-shirts are currently being sold on Namco's online arcade store, NamStore. Check out www.namcoarcade.com/namstore/ for details.





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PaRappa the Rapper 2

**HANDS-ON
PREVIEW**

I gotta eat noodles!

The PaRappa games have never had the most, ah, sensible of plotlines. Or settings. Or characters. (Who, after all, can forget the vomiting-bug goodness of Um Jammer Lammy?) But the plot to PaRappa 2, due in **January** from Sony, is just plain weird. It seems some diabolical force is changing every food item in PaRappa Town into noodles. Now PaRappa, along with friends and family, must undo this menace. How, you ask? Why, through the healing power of rap, of course. Through eight hip-hop sessions with a mind-boggling array of creatures, you help PaRappa get to the bottom of this sinister plot by following along with your teachers' funky rhythms, hitting the appropriate buttons in time to the music. There's a twist this time, though. The more advanced teachers don't want you to just parrot back what they're layin' down; instead, you need to exercise your own creative freedom a bit. Another addition is the interesting battle mode, in which two players (or you and the computer) repeat a single line to see who has the madder skillz. Introduce variations that the computer likes and your opponent has to match your freestyle groove. This should add some depth to this admittedly short game.

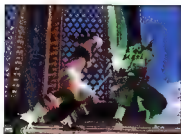


Soul Calibur 2

Get ready for this one

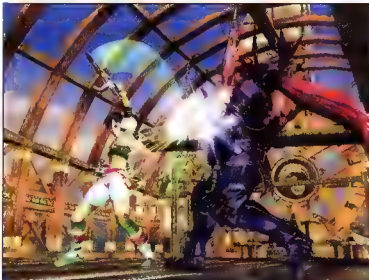
Taking place in the second half of the 16th century, Soul Calibur 2 centers around the concept of the world joining together with the East rediscovering the West and vice versa. As in the original Soul Calibur, ports and markets throughout Asia and Europe are abuzz with tales regarding a sword with infinite power called the Soul Edge and the mysterious evil spirit that possesses it. The tales also suggest that this evil spirit was responsible for awful carnage throughout Europe in the past. As years pass, the tales begin to change. Now, the whereabouts of this sword seem to have come to light as the awful spirit has returned to cause more destruction. Word reaches several interested parties, and they set out to find the Soul Edge. Also, a mysterious force has brought together those who have fought to obtain or destroy the sword in the past—thus setting the stage for Soul Calibur 2.

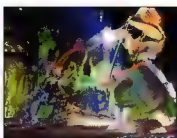
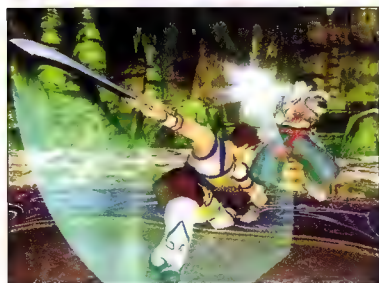
In case you haven't noticed from our past coverage of Soul Calibur 2, we're quite excited about this sequel that should hit the U.S. by **summer**. If the previous Soul Blade and Soul Calibur are any indication, Namco's PS2 fighter should compete directly with both Tekken 4 and Virtua Fighter 4. With this third entry, the company promises much improved graphics, larger environments, more characters, new moves and a new soundtrack from the original composers. Sounds too good to be true.



The Posse

From the screens we've seen so far, we know that Soul Blade and Soul Calibur veterans Taki and Mitsurugi return for a third series of scuffles, while Ivy, Nightmare, Asteroth, Siegfried and Kilik are back from only the previous game. As for new characters, so far we've spotted Chinese swordsmen Phan Yung Tsung, southeast Asian priestess Tarim, and sister of the deceased Sophitia, Cassandra Alexandra, who hails from Greece.





Tenchu 3

Although **Activision's** brutal, stylistic ninja sneak-'em-up will mark its first PS2 outing with a new developer at the helm (**IK2** instead of **Acquire**), we're expecting more of the same kind of action when the game is released in **2002**. Of course, a lot will be improved as well, like the awful draw distance and gimpy camera that plagued the PS one titles. Also noteworthy: *Tenchu 3* is a sequel to the first game, set one year after its end (whereas *Tenchu 2* was a prequel).



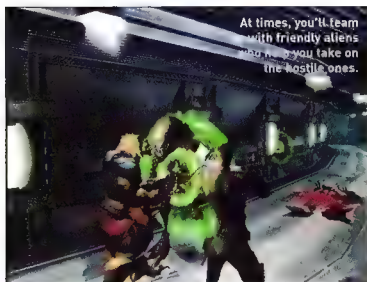
Jeremy McGrath Supercross World

Activision may be responsible for arguably the worst motocross series on PS one, but we're hoping things can turn around for the McGrath franchise's PS one debut, which the company released in **November**. However, our preview copy doesn't offer much optimism. Despite 10 riders and 25 tracks—some as wide open as in *ATV Offroad Fury*—the plain graphics and questionable physics fail to impress thus far.

Run Like Hell

Interplay's version of *Aliens* nears

After spending quite a bit of time with the game formerly known as Run Like Hell...then renamed RLH...and now Run Like Hell again, it looks like we can expect a bit of a mixed bag from Interplay in February. On the one hand, some truly excellent voice acting comes courtesy of performers like Kate Mulgrew (*Star Trek: Voyager*) and Lance Henriksen (*Millennium*), and frequent cutscenes throughout the *Aliens*-like story (perhaps more frequent than we've ever seen in an action game) make such quality performances all the more welcome. Also in its favor, RLH's action comes greatly varied, be it the standard shoot-the-aliens fare, controlling robots to do your bidding or, well, running like hell as you time button presses appropriately. On the other hand, though, we've seen better-looking games. Baldur's Gate this is not.



Maximo: Ghosts to Glory

HANDS-ON PREVIEW

A closer look at this great game's first level

As the January release of Capcom's self-congratulatory salute to the Ghosts 'N Goblins series nears, we thought we'd take a moment to show you the variety of perils faced by Maximo en route to rescuing the princess. Remember to keep one thing in mind, though—this is just the first level.



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Violence



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Virtua Fighter 4

**HANDS-ON
PREVIEW**

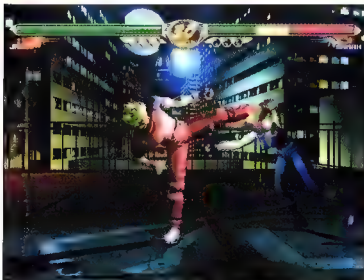
A virtually impossible task is accomplished

Sega's AM2 department is without a doubt one of the most skilled group of developers out there, but many doubted if even Yu Suzuki's famous team could bring the Naomi 2 (Sega's extremely powerful arcade board)-based Virtua Fighter 4 faithfully to PS2. Having spent a good amount of time playing the actual PS2 version under the watchful eye of Mr. Suzuki, we can wholeheartedly boast that AM2 is indeed deserving of all praise—its PS2 port of VF4 is nothing short of incredible.

Having been under development for around nine months now, most all of the complex and detailed backgrounds have been faithfully reproduced, complete with all the geometry and textures present in the arcade version. The water in the cave level moves exactly like it does in the arcade version, and the snowy level features the same stunning dynamic snow that melts under the combatants. The already-tight controls also prove extremely fun to play with a Dual Shock 2.

No arcade conversion would be complete without some cool extras, though, and as usual, Sega refuses to rest on its laurels in this department. A completely new stage enters the fray, as well, full of hidden characters, a complex practice mode and a virtual-pet-style AI mode, where you build up and train a character of your choice. You can customize this character and save him or her onto a memory card, then take your creation to a friend's house, load him up, and do battle against your friend's AI character of choice. This is just one of the several methods AM2 is using to create the same kind of "comm.un.ty" feel that the arcade game has managed with its mobile-network support, which allows players to check each other's ranking and stats online.

AM2 still has a ways to go, though, with plenty more characters and stages needing to be added to the PS2 version before its release. The resolution of the game is a bit low at the moment, too, but according to Suzuki, this is simply due to the current stage of the development. Expect to see Virtua Fighter 4 up and running on your PS2 around **spring**.



Mug Shot

Character detail is absolutely amazing in Virtua Fighter 4, with sharply animated facial movement and some very nifty dynamics witnessed in the characters' clothes. The intricate textures of the arcade game have been brought to the PS2 remarkably well, which is no doubt due to the skill of AM2's programmers and artists. To the left we see a closeup of Jackie, who, in motion, has moving eyes, facial expressions and flowing hair.

JEREMY McGRATH supercross world

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LEU 12
9322

LEU 22
FREESTYLE



innovative stunt advantage system and
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STUNT



THERE ARE MANY RIDERS.
BUT THERE IS ONLY ONE KING.



Mild Lyrics



PlayStation 2





Looney Tunes: Space Race

Infogrames is currently porting the fun kart-style cartoon racing game Looney Tunes: Space Race from Dreamcast to PS2 for a release in **March**. Featuring a slew of the popular Looney characters—Bugs, Daffy, Elmer and Taz included—the title's courses span over eight worlds from around the universe, as well as two absent from the previous version. Also sporting plenty of trademark ACME goodies, prepare for loads of laughs with this one.



Power Pro Tennis: WTA Edition

If you're going to make a women's tennis game and you want to capture the male audience, the trick is to feature Anna Kournikova. Just the sight of her makes adult men act like note-passing middle-schoolers. Unfortunately, Konami's new tennis game, due this **spring**, comes without the Russian goddess. But it does feature the cute pumpkin-headed "Swiss Miss," Martina Hingis, along with Serena Williams, Monica Seles and Jelena Dokic, plus 16 others.

Mobile Suit Gundam: Zeonic Front

HANDS-ON PREVIEW

Gundam it! This is actually a good game!

Gundam Mere whispers of this word evoke fear and trembling in gamers everywhere. And for good reason—although Gundam fans are legion, Gundam games have been a fairly miserable lot. That all could change, though, as **Bandai** might have what it takes to turn around this terrible track record with the **January** release of Zeonic Front. Sporting a balanced mix of real-time, squad-based strategy and mech-blasting action, Zeonic Front is complex enough to challenge cerebral gamers while straightforward enough to satisfy someone looking for quick-'n'-dirty action. Although there's plenty to fiddle with (mission routes, Mobile Suit setups, team commands, battle strategies), the game eases you into the action at a comfortable pace, increasing the complexity with each mission. And as an added twist, you play as the Zeonic Forces (the bad guys in the Gundam universe, duh!) in this fabulous-looking game. Believe us when we say being a bad, bad mech has never looked so good.



While you only directly control one Mobile Suit at a time, you can set strategies for the others in your party. Maybe it wasn't such a good idea to tell that other MS to run into the fray and get blasted?



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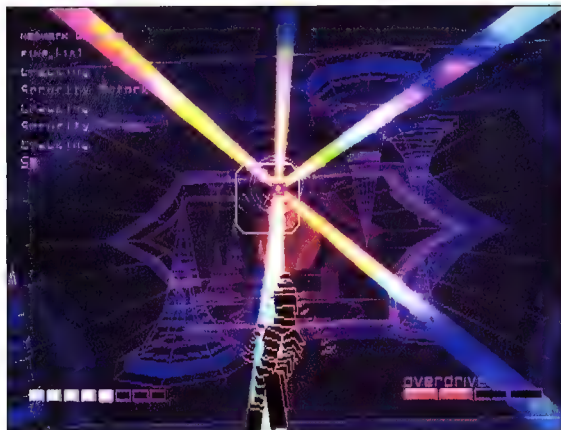
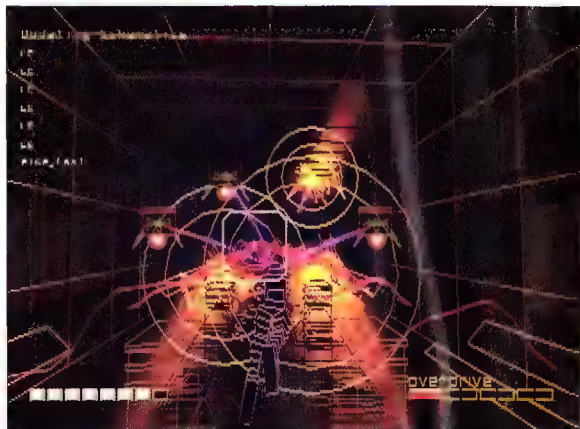
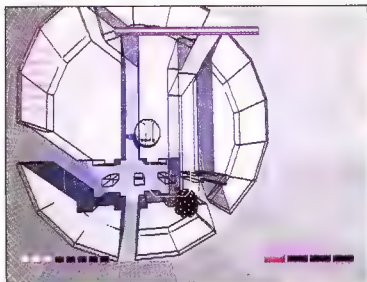
Rez

See the music, feel the music

Here's a question: What would you get if you were to combine Fantavision with R-Type Delta, sprinkling in a touch of WipeOut and Vib Ribbon? The answer? We have no idea, but we bet it would play a lot like Rez. This spectacularly unusual shooter comes to the PS2 in January courtesy of **Sega**, and we're willing to bet you've never seen anything quite like it.

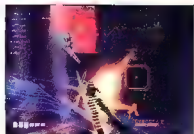
Rez sends players hurtling through a musical cyberspace in search of a powerful artificial intelligence named Eden. It may follow the basic outline of a standard shooter—shoot, collect power-ups, shoot some more—but its delivery is utterly unique. Set to a thumping ambient soundtrack accompanied by rhythmic pulsing of the controller, everything in the game flows musically. Destroy enemies and you'll be rewarded, not with a loud explosion, but with a musical tone. Lock onto a series of targets and fire, and the timing of your attacks will be quantized to fit into the rhythm of the soundtrack. It's extraordinarily hypnotic, and it's easy to get lost in the lush musical environments and the clean, futuristic, vector-based graphics. But do so at your own peril: This game ramps up in difficulty fairly quickly, and you'll need sharp eyes to pick out every last power-up in order to increase your "health" [see sidebar]. It's an experience not to be missed by the musically inclined—and those who simply wish they were.

**HANDS-ON
PREVIEW**



Stay in Shape

Your "health" in Rez is represented visually by the condition of your character. You begin as a vaguely humanoid shape (right top) seemingly composed of stacked rings, but if you get hit you will devolve into a simple ball (right bottom). This means one more hit and you're dead, so you'll have to collect enough blue power-ups to gain your former shape. Earning these power-ups is absolutely crucial if you want to survive much past the first level.





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Dangerous.



Illegal.



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Forever Kingdom

In spite of being one of the first PS2 RPGs, Evergrace failed to garner more than lukewarm reviews. But **Agetec** is expecting to salvage the series' rep with the release of this sequel, due out in early **January**. This time you control three characters all traveling together, and you can switch between the three at the touch of a button. Also new are the joint Palmira Actions, wherein the player can build devastating combos by having each character attack in careful sequence.



MotoGP 2

When it comes to games with wide appeal, MotoGP isn't a sport that hits a home run with the American populace. But gamers who passed up the first MotoGP might definitely want to give the second a shake. You can expect 10 tracks, an updated season, and new tire options and weather conditions. There's even a mode where you can race against legendary MotoGPists. We still don't have a release date from **Namco**, but we've heard it's due by **mid-year 2002**.

Headhunter

HANDS-ON PREVIEW

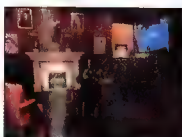
You know Gabe and Snake—now meet Jack Wade

One of the more secretive **Sega** games in development is **Headhunter**. Swedish developer **Amuze** has quietly been working away on this promising PS2 action title for the past 18 months. And like another Scandinavian-developed action game, **Max Payne**, Amuze and Sega have been very slow to release any details about **Headhunter**, so it was quite surprising to receive an advanced preview version of the developer's debut PS2 title. Even more surprising was the quality already evident in this build.

Taking place in a near-future California overrun with crime, the player assumes the role of a cop named Jack Wade who used to work for the ACN (Anti-Crime Network). Wade is recovering from a mission where he nearly lost his life. Upon getting back into action, he finds out his close friend and the CEO of ACN was murdered. The daughter of the murdered CEO hires the still-recuperating Wade to find out just what the hell is going on in gang-controlled California. Anyone who has seen Paul Verhoeven's classic **RoboCop** will find **Headhunter**'s satiric and censored newscasts very familiar. The government is trying to keep all problems under the surface, so to speak, and this is accomplished by censoring the news, where two happily grinning morons relay the latest sports scores.

The gameplay is best described as an amalgam of **Syphon Filter** and **Metal Gear Solid**, and **Headhunter**'s beginning introduces the play mechanics in an ingenious way. Wade has lost his ACN license due to his mishap, so the player has to go through various virtual tests to prove himself capable. Linear 3D action sequences connect with amazingly well-done motorcycle scenes, which feature the player taking it to the streets of Cali and driving to locations shown on the map. The action consists mainly of gunfighting and searching various premises for clues, but there's some stealth required too.

Headhunter is already looking like it has what it takes to stand in the same league as a **Syphon Filter** or **Metal Gear Solid**. Unfortunately, we don't yet have a U.S. release date for the game, but since European gamers get it this winter, we'll hopefully see **Headhunter** by **mid-2002**. Stay tuned.





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WITHOUT THE FROSTBITE.**



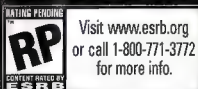
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PlayStation 2



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Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2

FIRST LOOK

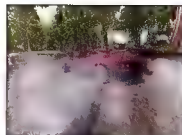
Hot is absolutely right

High-octane car chases kill. Presumably, they also entertain the average bloodthirsty American male, as EA Games resurrects its top road warrior for another test drive come spring. Though its pedal-to-the-metal [a.k.a. balls-to-the-wall] automotive competitions aren't new to gaming vets, the next *Need for Speed*'s newly focused take on illicit joyrides might send their mental gearshifts into overdrive.

More than 20 licensed vehicles, ranging from McLaren models to the effervescent Lamborghini Diablo and Corvette C5R, grace *Hot Pursuit 2*'s virtual garage. They're all yours for the jacking, assuming you've completed enough of a branching scenario tree to unlock the pricey bastards. Standing between potential vehicular-homicide poster boys and candy-painted autos out of a gangsta rapper's wet dream are serious obstacles—say, police, commuter traffic and outstanding arrest warrants. Alas, it's all in a day's work for those skirting the law for fun and profit—or just a high score.

Express, Challenge, Ultimate Driver (career mode) and *Hot Pursuit* options rely on PS2-optimized code to power expansive outdoor runs. Large, open environments free of track boundaries provide woody, rugged areas or paved tracks upon which four-wheeled fantasies can be realized. Lushly detailed landscapes fly by as you cruise along swiftly, so don't forget to stop and check out the scenery. Or not, if you'd rather seize the day, thereby snagging an upgrade in lieu of that Hallmark moment.

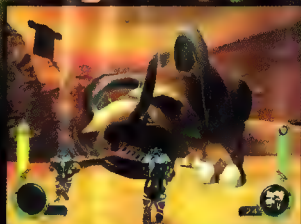
Multiplayer will, of course, be a major attraction, as well. Though limited to two-player competitions, several variations are planned, including the ever-popular Knockout contest. One can safely hypothesize that much motorized mayhem awaits whether flying solo or with a buddy, as speed traps again enter the equation. Count on more coverage of this one in future issues.



GIANTS CITIZEN KABUTO

PREPARE TO GET BLOWN AWAY.

— DAILY RADAR



PlayStation 2



Blood and Gore
Violence

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Space Channel 5 Part 2

Although the original bombed on Dreamcast, **Sega** hopes that this *Space Channel 5* sequel may find a PS2 audience. While not much is known about Part 2, it's confirmed that you'll once again play as the hip, sexy reporter Ulala and convince others to dance along with you. We also know the spring release to feature Michael Jackson, who once again makes a cameo in the game (he's had a lasting relationship with Sega ever since his Moonwalker arcade/Genesis game).



Samurai

From *Acquire*, the folks who brought you the first two *Tenchus*, comes this spring release to Japan. This time you play as a samurai, though, not a ninja, and it promises to be a much more cinematic affair, with stealth remaining paramount. Choose to play on the side of outlaws or, for example, be a guard for a stage they are trying to rob. You can even double-cross people, which might result in one of several possible endings.

Wizardry: Tale of the Forsaken Land

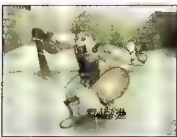
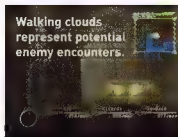
HANDS-ON PREVIEW

Role-playing in the truest sense of the word

If you spent your days and nights playing role-playing games on your computer back in the '80s and early '90s, you no doubt dabbled a bit with *Wizardry*, a franchise that helped revolutionize the on-screen RPG. Now that we've seen a bit of *Atlus*' take on the series, it's obvious the developers at *Racjin* have done their best to stay true to the depth and core gameplay established two decades ago.

Your adventure begins in a town plagued by incessant snow ever since a mysterious "Flash" occurred, which also wiped out much of the population. The burg also serves as your main hub, from which you can recruit party members and take up quests at the tavern; buy/sell weapons, armor, etc. from the shop; resurrect the dead at the temple; change occupations at the guild; or spend the night at the inn to heal and possibly level up. And, oh yeah, there's a labyrinth there, too, wrought with the perils welcomed by any brave adventurer.

Forsaken Land isn't exactly aiming to overthrow the *Final Fantasy* *Xes* out there, as all characters are 2D stills (see Rui to the right), the turn-based battle system stays old-school as ever, and no spoken dialogue exists whatsoever. However, there's still considerable depth for anyone who just loves to level up. You can join the action in **December**.



Create a Hero

Staying true to *Wizardry* form, *Forsaken Land* requires you to build a hero through this process: 1) Name your character. 2) Select a uniquely talented race (human, elf, dwarf, gnome or hobbit).

3) Determine if he's good, evil or neutral (affects class). 4) Choose a class, like warrior, thief, priest or sorcerer. 5) Attribute bonus points to power, wisdom, faith, life, speed and luck. Deep, huh?





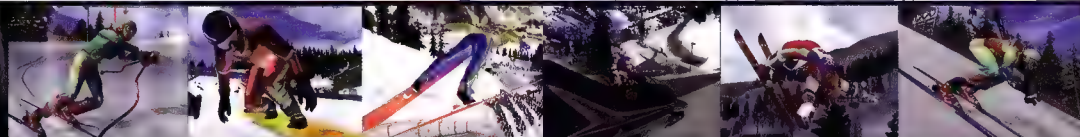
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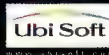
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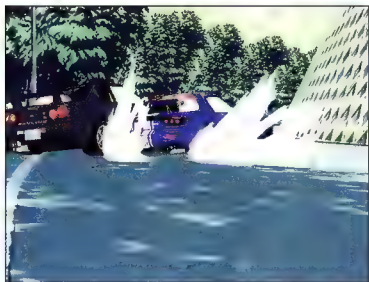
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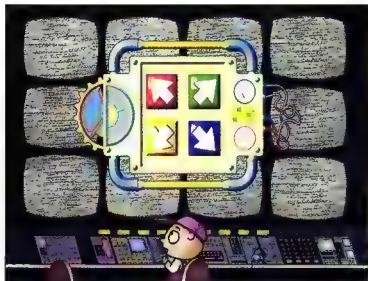


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Auto Modellista

We know that cel-shading (the technique that makes game graphics look all cartoony) is all the rage now, but who would have thought it would work in a racing title? Well, **Capcom** has delivered yet another first with this game, set for a spring release in Japan. Featuring lots of vehicle customization and a style of gameplay resembling a sort of cross between Tokyo Xtreme Racer and Gran Turismo 3, Auto Modellista will be one of the PS2's first online racers.



Switch

As a remake of the Sega CD game known stateside as Panic!, this interesting puzzle game centers around an out-of-control super-computer in control of the world. Your task is to help save many of the world's most famous landmarks by pressing lots of buttons and switches to set them straight. **Sega's** PS2 version of the game, being developed by its **Wave Master** division, is said to naturally feature much improved graphics, and will sport a new soundtrack.

Gran Turismo 3: Concept



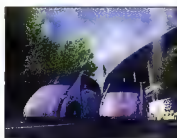
Odd wheels

Admit it. You just can't get enough of GT3. Don't be ashamed; you're not alone. In fact, Japanese gamers are so insatiable that **Sony CEI** is already preparing an add-on disc for the unmatched racer for a release in **January** (and, incidentally, at a budget price of 3200 yen, about \$26). This sort-of sequel features 20 new rides based exclusively on extraordinary concept cars by the world's leading manufacturers. So far, the roster includes such unique models as the Honda Dual Note, the Nissan GT-R, the Toyota RSC (short for Rugged Sports Coupe, an all-wheel-drive sports car on steroids) and the unbelievably quirky Toyota pod. The game only features five tracks, though, and the four revealed so far are ones we've seen already in GT3; we've also heard the game will only include the Arcade mode. This may disappoint some fans, but let's be honest here; the game's all about the wacky cars and nothing more. Sony hasn't commented on a U.S. release yet, but we're keeping our fingers crossed.



New rides

The Toyota RSC (left) may look like a Ford Focus, but word on the street says this puppy can smoke the Suzuki Escudo on its worst day. We're skeptical, ourselves, but that's mainly because it looks so, well... fruity. Of course, its fruitiness doesn't hold a candle to the Toyota pod (below), which features LED lights on the body to give it "personality." The colors and patterns actually change with the car's "mood." No, we're not making this up.



Key Features

- ◆ Create and customize your party members from 5 races and 8 character classes!
- ◆ Over a hundred items and weapons to discover!
- ◆ Advanced 3D battle engine allows you to fight over a dozen enemies at the same time!
- ◆ Fear the Reaper! Explore a vast underground world, but don't lose your way or the Reaper will come for your soul!
- ◆ Combining the power of certain magic stones paves the way to stronger spells. Are you good enough to find them all?
- ◆ Allied Actions are the key to victory, but will clashing personalities in your party keep you from realizing your maximum potential?

A New Tale for a New Generation

WIZARDRY
TALE OF THE FORSAKEN LAND



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PlayStation 2

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Coming Soon

December

Hosn game: Running Blue Earth
Kokkoboxing
Mega Man X6

January

Dodgeball
Hidden & Dangerous

Future Releases

Black & White
Delta Force: Urban Warfare
Dragon Warrior IV
Planet of the Apes
X-Band In-Line Skating

Athos
AgeTec/A1 Games
Capcom

AgeTec/A1 Games
Take 2

TBA
NovaLogic
Enix
Ubi Soft
Crave

Strategy
Sports
Action

Sports
Action

Adventure
FPS
RPG
Adventure
X-Sports

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone

HANDS-ON
PREVIEW

The Potter magic remains even on PS one

Coming up with a game based on Harry Potter—a franchise that appeals to the imaginations of both young and old—must not have been an easy task for EA Games and developer Argonaut. But having spent a good amount of time with a near-final version of Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone, we can safely say that the two have put together a product that will likely appeal to gamers of all ages.

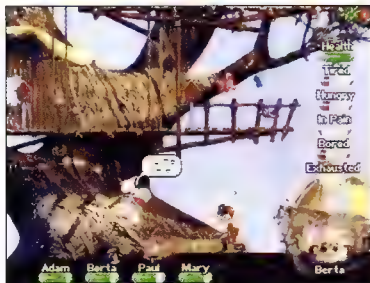
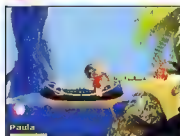
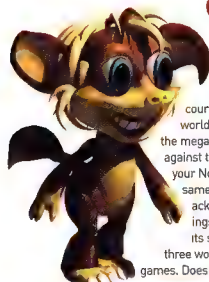
This is accomplished in a variety of ways, the most obvious being the controls, which you learn throughout the course of gameplay. They're quite easy for the younger ones to grasp, yet still captivating enough for seasoned players. You can accomplish most everything with the analog stick, including climbing and jumping. Simply bring Harry to the edge of one platform and he'll automatically hop to the next, for example. You can then perform magic attacks with the X button, and the game automatically casts the spell required for each situation, thereby negating the need for confusing menu selection.

But what makes Sorcerer's Stone really work, other than its ability to remain quite faithful to the novel on which it's based, is its sheer variety of puzzles and gameplay mechanics, a staple of Argonaut titles as of late. You naturally get the standard platforming elements, but all sorts of other cool gameplay aspects exist, as well, including a Metal Gear Solid-like stealth scene, a game of Quidditch (a sporting event where you fly atop a broom) and a minicart race. In fact, the spells that you learn even have you performing PaRappa the Rapper-style button combinations.

If we've encountered any weakness in the game so far, it's that certain situations, like boss fights, might prove a little tasking for younger players. But you can judge that for yourselves if you'd like, as Harry Potter will be available in stores everywhere by the time you read this.

Creatures

Though the Creatures games have sold over a million copies worldwide on PC, console players have yet to come across this series of artificial-life simulators—at least not until early 2002, courtesy of Conspiracy Entertainment. In the world of Albia, you take on a parental role over the mega-cute Norns, helping the species survive against the pestering Grendels. During the life of your Norns, no two of which are ever exactly the same, you'll witness how they learn and acknowledge each other and their surroundings. Clearly targeted at a young audience with its simple user interface, the game includes three worlds to explore, as well as two bonus games. Does the PS one finally have its Pokémon?



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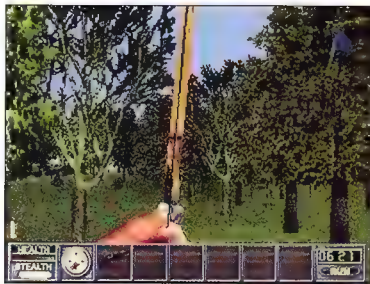


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Cabela's Big Game Hunter: Ultimate Challenge

Who says video games can't teach us good values? Take this hunting sim, for example. Ultimate Challenge includes "all applicable hunting laws to guarantee the trophy you take is a legal one." How nice. Even better, the X-Ray option lets players peek at the internal organs of downed game, so novices can learn how to execute quick, clean kills. You can thank **Activision** for releasing this game, out in stores **now**.



Hoshigami: Ruining Blue Earth

Finally, the long wait for this hotly anticipated strategy/RPG is over! Apparently, the team at **Atlus** toiled away up until the very last minute to get this game out in time for the **holidays**. (It was originally slated to hit stores last summer!) With its epic tactical battles, though, Hoshigami may very well have been worth the wait. So will Hoshigami distinguish itself as one of the last great games for the PS one? You'll have to wait for our review next month to find out.

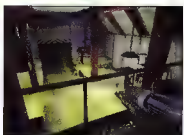
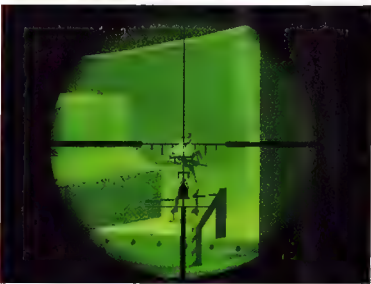


Delta Force: Urban Warfare

NovaLogic bursts onto the scene

Did you know that you already own the entire library of **NovaLogic** PS one games? Primarily involved with PC releases, the company is mainly known for its war-related franchises. One such series is Delta Force, and if you want to keep your NovaLogic PS one collection up to date, you'll need to pick up **Urban Warfare** in **May**.

Action takes place first-person-shooter style, as you assume the roles of several uniquely talented Delta Force soldiers in a top-secret mission that pits you against a "new and unique AI system." **Rebellion** takes on development duties—so we expect this one to be every bit as "good" as *The Mummy* and *Rainbow Six*.



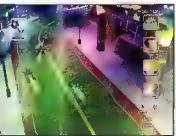
Pajama Sam

Infogrames' popular line of PC edutainment titles is **now** available on PS one. Subtitled "You Are What You Eat From Your Head to Your Feet," Pajama Sam helps the U/I ones learn puzzle solving, plus good eating habits



Cubix: Race 'N Robots

Apparently, the kids are all into Cubix these days. Billed as "Robots for Everyone," you can check out their adventures on the Kids WB! or just pick up a few of your own at Toys 'R' Us. **3DO** jumps into the marketing fray in **December** with the release of **Race 'N Robots**. As the title might suggest, it's a kart racer at its core, complete with upgrades and nine cute stages through which to race. Controls are simple, as you need only use the analog stick to play.



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Jak and Daxter has a lot to live up to.

Developed by the darlings of the U.S.

PlayStation development community,

many folks have the game pinned as the

next "big franchise" game that will

introduce new characters into popular

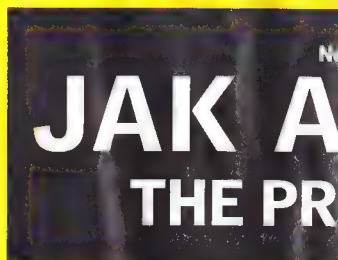
culture. Can they be the next big buddy

stars of gaming?

You may wonder why we've been making such a big deal about Jak and Daxter over the past few months, and even more surprised to see their crazy eyes staring out of the cover this month. What's the big deal? Most folks have never heard of the game. It's not a sequel to anything, it has a silly long name, and that weasel-looking thing is definitely looking at us funny.

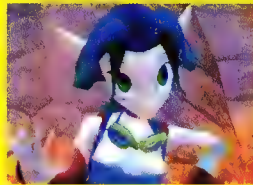
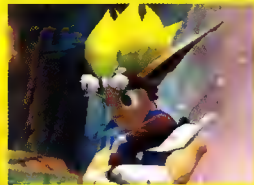
All the fuss is actually because of the folks who have been working on the game for the past few years, Naughty Dog. Who are they? Well, they're the guys who unleashed Crash Bandicoot on an unsuspecting world back in 1996, and who went on to make three more games based on the loony orange marsupial which, when you add up all the copies sold, you get a number close to 22 million. That's about \$1.1 billion making its way across the counters of game stores around the world for those of you who don't have a calculator handy. That makes Naughty Dog by far the most successful U.S. developer of PlayStation games, and, you'd think, a collection of quite well-off individuals who probably don't need to work ever again if they don't feel like it. They've already been through the "Ferrari stage" of being rich, and now seem to be quite firmly ensconced in the "doing it for the love" stage. It's not always been this way though. The company began in 1986 as Jam Software and received a grand total of \$250 for its first game, Ski Crazed for the Apple II. Things have come a long way since then.

Fortunately, the 30-strong team (who, it has to be said, don't all drive Ferraris) have been motivated enough to have another stab at creating a game franchise. The verbosely



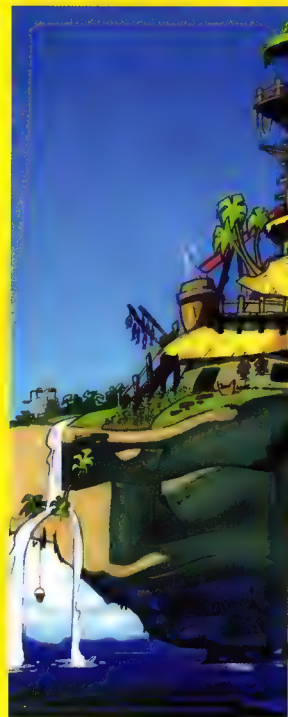
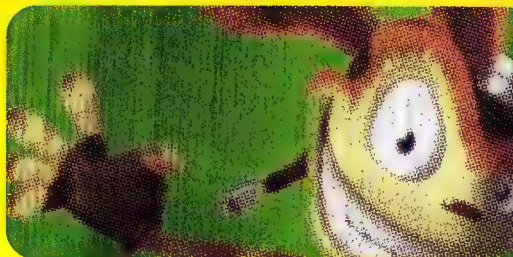
by John Davison and Joe Rybicki

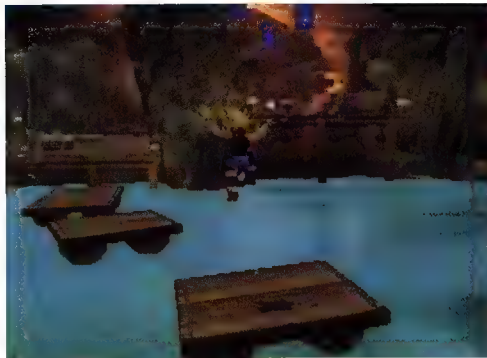
photographs by Shuji Kobayashi



new mascots for the PlayStation 2?

ND DAXTER ECURSOR LEGACY





titled Jak and Daxter: The Precursor Legacy is the fruit of labors that actually began while the team was putting the finishing touches to Crash 2 back in 1998. Now a wholly owned subsidiary of Sony Computer Entertainment America [they were an independent studio until earlier this year when Sony bought them], Naughty Dog is one of those teams from which game-industry types tend to expect great things. Judging from the screenshots that populate the next few pages, it's a pretty safe assumption to say that no one is going to take issue with the way the game looks. It's truly a beautiful-looking product that pushes the PS2 in ways that many other developers have so far failed to do.

"We wanted Dee Snyder from the start...because he's cool."

DYNAMIC DUOS ACE AND GARY



HIGHS—Sharing your vocation with your friend of friends means never having to fight crime alone.

LOWS—All those sly, knowing looks.

LEGACY—Superheroes everywhere are comfortable with admitting their feelings for one another.

Can Inspiration Strike Twice?

To get to the bottom of how a team that's been so successful with one franchise can pull another one out of its nether regions, we locked ourselves in a huge conference room at Naughty Dog's Santa Monica, Calif.-based studio and insisted they dish the dirt.

Studio heads Jason Rubin and Andy Gavin are not the type of people who would immediately spring to mind when you think "computer programmer." Affable, witty, socially adept...um, hang on, shouldn't they be pasty-looking, mumbling braniacs? Rubin, who should be a familiar name if you read a lot of video games magazines, will no doubt be making some of our female readers swoon this month. Girls...yes, he is actu-

ally a programmer. We figure he must exist in a different dimension where junk food and no sunlight make you slim. And tan. Oh well. Did we mention he's rich too? We have his phone number if anyone would like it. He certainly has plenty



Jason Rubin (left), Osiris (center) and Andy Gavin give us a good indication of why they call themselves "Naughty Dog." Accessories supplied by a Santa Monica bondage store.

to say about his new creation, too. While Gavin demonstrates the game on the most fabulous flat-panel TV we've ever seen, Rubin speaks of his frustrations with other games.

"We wanted to take the action genre and mix it with the RPG genre," he explains. "If you take a straight action game like Mario 64 or something, you can play it all the way through and have a fantastic time, but at the end of it all you sit back and ask yourself why you bothered. There's no real goal. Zelda, on the other hand, gave gamers a beautiful world to explore and a good story, but you're never really challenged by anything. We wanted to do something that

DYNAMIC DUOS BERT AND ERNIE



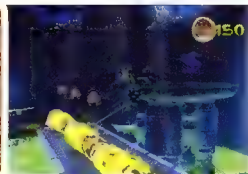
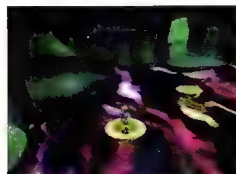
HIGHS—In spite of success of Sesame Street albums, duo refuses to forsake the 'hood.



LOWS—Bert and Ernie are not as popular as the other two.



LEGACY—Sometimes two guys who live together and sleep in the same room can just be friends.

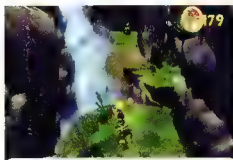


took both ideas and kind of melded them together."

Surely this isn't that much of a novel concept though? Isn't it a tad formulaic still? Couldn't it be argued that something like, say, Tomb Raider or Soul Reaver did a pretty good job of melding both concepts? After spending some time with Jak and Daxter, it's clear that Naughty Dog's own particular blend is well-executed, even if it's not exactly original. The story unfolds in a very cartoon-like fashion with high-production

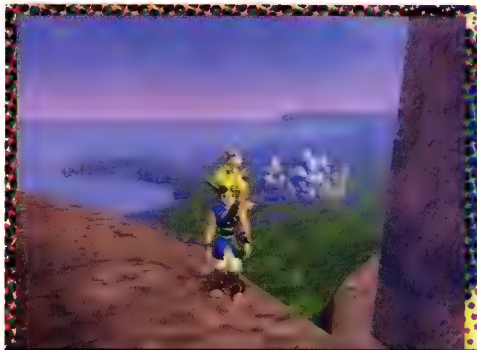
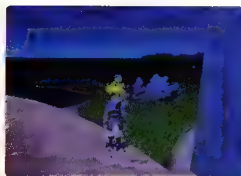
values, but conversations with protagonists reveal a very quest-oriented gameplay structure. Early previews of the game gave it some heat for being little more than a huge collect-a-thon in the mold of N64 games like Banjo-Kazooie/Tooie. Our first few hours reviewing the game gave us cause to be reminded of just about every decent platform game ever made, but extensive play reveals that it's a far more character-driven affair than you'd expect. Jak and Daxter themselves are very distinct-

"We've all played Gex, and let's face it, we knew that we really didn't want Gex."



tive, and they're not alone in that respect. All of the key figures in the story are revealed very early on and are both unique-looking and superbly voiced. There are a few famous voices in the game, although Rubin assures us, "We're not about the big famous voices—just good talent." The most "famous" person used as far as we're concerned is Dee Snyder, erstwhile lead singer of Twisted Sister, and currently a successful radio personality in L.A., who plays the bad guy. "We wanted Dee Snyder from the start," Rubin laughs. Er...why? "Because he's cool." Ah...spoken like a true child of the '80s.

"The first year of development was on



The game world is absolutely vast. Everything you can see in this screenshot is part of the game environment, and you can get to any point without ever noticing any discernable load times. There's also a full day/night cycle.

two things: the technology and the characters," Rubin explains. "Right from the start, we knew that we wanted one character that talked, and exuded a lot of, well, 'character,'" he tells us. "And that's Daxter. Jak is supposed to be

'you,' you need to put yourself in his place, and that's why he doesn't say much. He's a fairly neutral-looking guy, and that's intentional. We found that our friends in Japan thought he seemed like a very Western character, while a lot of

ADD IT UP

It's unlikely that even Naughty Dog would disagree that Jak and Daxter is a bit formulaic. From the collectable "fruit"—the Precursor Orbs—to the obligatory mine carts, the game seems to hit all the old platform standbys. This led us to imagine how a true "formula" for Jak and Daxter might look...



Crash Bandicoot

Spyro the Dragon



Soul Reaver



Marilyn Manson



Banjo-Kazooie



Deliverance



Mario 64



Twisted Sister



DYNAMIC DUOS MULDER AND SCULLY



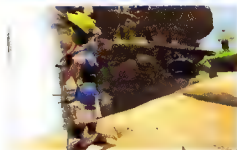
HIGHS—Well, how do you think she ended up with his baby?



LOWS—Shooting each other on Christmas Eve.



LEGACY—At 10:01 p.m. every Sunday, fanboys flood the Internet to pick each episode apart.



Graphically, the game pushes the PS2 in ways that we haven't seen before. There's no need for prerendered cutscenes as the in-game graphics are so good. The animation is world-class stuff.

people close to the development here in the U.S. think that he seems to have been influenced by Japanese anime. That's a good thing, and it means we got the balance right. We wanted Jak to appeal to everyone." That's very cool, but back to Dexter for a second...what exactly is he? He's certainly a very expressive character, and by far the most "cartoon"-influenced of anyone in the game with his effusive exclamations and exaggerated movements,

but is he a ferret? Some kind of cat? "An Ottsel: half otter, half weasel," Andy Gavin tells us. "The opening movie of the game explains Dexter's story," we're told. "His transformation is a key component to the way the story unfolds, and his motivation for sticking with you throughout the game, aside from the fact that he's your best buddy, is basically that he wants to be turned back into his humanoid form." Who wouldn't?

cess was driven through sales there. "When we did Crash," Rubin explains, "Sony Japan asked for a lot of changes before they released it. You just have to look at the box art to see the differences. We had images of him sat on a motorcycle or whatever, and they had him looking all goofy with these huge eyes. It's just the way things are...but it's an important consideration when you're working on a global product. You don't think the reason that Disney's "look" has evolved in recent years isn't for the same reason? Think again. Stuff has to work everywhere."

"Sony Japan and Sony Europe were involved in Jak and Dexter right from the beginning so everyone always had a hand in how things would look," he continues. Isn't that a bit forced and manufactured though? Surely designing something with so much input only quashes the creativity of the character designers? Let's face it, boy bands are

"manufactured" to appeal to everyone, and they're a bit vapid aren't they? "Sure, the characters are manufactured," smiles Rubin, "but that's our job. Crash was manufactured too. Crash was designed to be a character the whole world would love. Jak and Dexter are no different. You can't just create a

"Sure, the characters are manufactured...but that's our job. Crash was manufactured too."

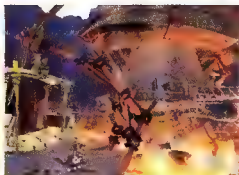
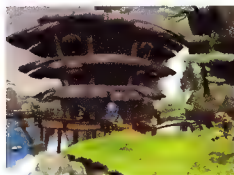
DYNAMIC DUOS MARY-KATE AND ASHLEY



- HIGHS**— Fall House, when they each only had to work half-time.
- LOWS**— The games, oh dear lord, the games!
- LEGACY**— Lechers wait patiently for their career to decline into pornography.

They're Big "Over There" Too

Unlike many Western developers, Naughty Dog enjoys considerable success in the Japanese market, and a large portion of Crash's enormous suc-



DYNAMIC DUOS SIMON AND GARFUNKEL



- HIGHS**— The choruses in "Bridge Over Troubled Water."
- LOWS**— Paul forsakes Art in favor of Ellie Breckell.
- LEGACY**— A new standard set for concerts in Central Park.

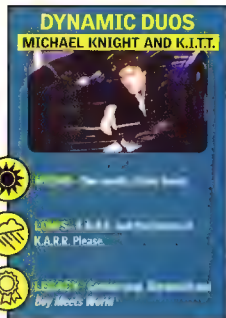
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character, make him talk, and then force it on people. We've all played Gex, and let's face it, we knew that we really didn't want Gex." So are there trained professionals in this field? Or were the characters just focused-grouped to

of work because of the characters, though. When you get to play the game when it hits stores in early December [we'll also have a playable demo on our PS2 demo disc next month...make sure you pick up a copy!], you'll notice that

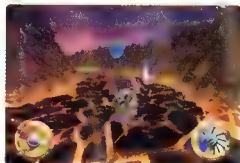
"We got a lot of help from Hollywood character designers. They helped us work out what did and didn't work."

within an inch of their lives? "We got a lot of help from Hollywood character designers," Rubin explains. "They helped us work out what did and didn't work."

A Technical Marvel

The game isn't just an impressive piece

it's a definite step up from your average PlayStation 2 game. For a start, aside from when you first put the disc in the console, there are no discernable load times. The whole world just seems to be this single, huge and endless world. "Zero load times was one of our main goals right from the very start," Gavin



explains. "Load times are usually the last consideration when people are working on a game, and that's why you so often have to wait around for ages

SIX DEGREES OF... JAK AND DAXTER

We did some research on some of the bigger names involved in Jak and Daxter to find out how else they might be related. Got suggestions for future games? Mail them to us at opma.ziffdavis.com, with the subject line SIX DEGREES.



PHIL HARTMAN
The late comic was beloved in all of his decades of recurring comedic roles. He was also in *Pee-wee's Big Adventure* with...



DEE SNIDER
He's Jak and Daxter's main villain, was the lead singer of Twisted Sister, and was also in *Howard Stern's Private Parts* with...



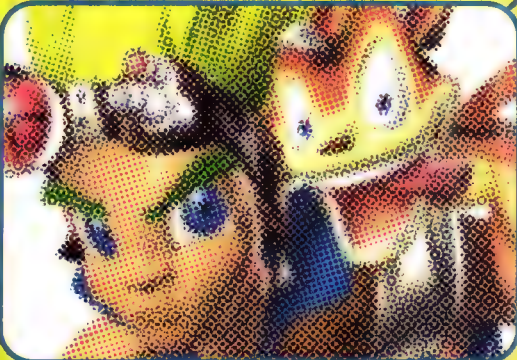
"STUTTERING" JOHN MELENDEZ
This Howard Stern sidekick has appeared in a few films, including *Duds*, *Where's My Car?* with...



DAVID HERMAN
He plays the Sculptor and Boggy Billy in Jak and Daxter, was "Mike Bolton" in *Office Space*, and was in *Olive, the Other Reindeer* with...



MAX CASELLA
Max is the voice of Daxter, but also played Timon in *The Lion King* on Broadway. Oh, and Vinnie Delapino. Plus, he was in *Sgt. Bilko* with...



ED ASNER
Best known as Lou Grant on *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, Asner was also in 1992's *Batman: The Animated Series* with...



KEVIN CONROY
The voice of the Fisherman in Jak and Daxter is best-known as the voice of Batman in the cartoon, who stars alongside...



NEIL PATRICK HARRIS
Let's be honest here. Harris is, and likely always will be, known for playing Doogie Howser, M.D., with...



MARK HAMILL
On top of being everyone's favorite annoying farmboy, he's the voice of the Joker, and was in the *Wing Commander* games with...



DENISE RICHARDS
Not just a pretty face. OK, she may be just a pretty face, but she was in *Starship Troopers* with...



KEVIN BACON
No celebrity assemblage is complete without him. Long after *Footloose*, he starred in the steamy *Wild Things* with...



CLINT HOWARD
This ubiquitous B-movie and character actor (and brother to Ron "Opie" Howard) was seen in *My Dog Skip* alongside...



JOHN RHYSDAVIES
Probably best known as Sallah in *Indiana Jones*, he was also in a film called *The Protector* with...



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Violence
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It's a gorgeous game, but it absorbs a lot of the gaming clichés. You've got your lush forest level, your snowy wastes, and of course, your lava level. Where would video games be without such tried-and-tested formulas to fall back on? The thing is...with Jak and Daxter, it works so well and looks so great, you don't mind one bit.

and ages. The things just aren't designed to work well. We wanted a single cohesive world, that was always the goal from the beginning."

We could name a certain recent game based on a character familiar to Andy and Jason that suffers particularly badly in this

respect. "You can load the entire memory of the PS2 in 13 or 14 seconds, so anything that takes longer than that is almost impressive!" he laughs.

It's clear that the new game is a huge jump technologically from what the team has worked on before. Clearly this is all the doing of the freedom offered by the PS2 "There were 3,000 polygons per frame in

DYNAMIC DUOS BATMAN AND ROBIN



HIGHS



LOWS—60s camp, Robin being replaced by a girl in *The Dark Knight Returns*.



LEGACY—Vigilantes refuse to take time out to unwind.

instead of the 30 frames that Crash ran at. There are about 70 million polygons in the total game. By way of comparison, there were about 250,000 to 400,000 in Crash." If that means little or nothing to you...what it essentially means is that world feels "alive" now. It's beautifully rendered, is filled with cute touches, and is all animated with cartoon-like expressive movements. "No PC technology has developed as quickly as the jump in PlayStation technology," Rubin explains, clearly used to evangelizing the PS2 and its technical innards. "It's the tools, which run on PCs, that are holding up PS2 development these days. The machine is more powerful than the equipment we use to create the games for it. Games that move a lot of data around like this one—the development software just can't handle it. That's why you're seeing games at the moment that don't necessarily live up to the potential of the machine." So, um, how come Jak and

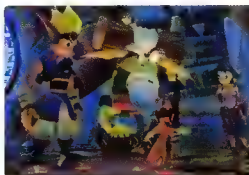


The Naughty Dog team, of which there are far too many people to list here. For full bios on everyone on the team, check out www.naughtydog.com and visit "The Kennel" for mugshots, background info and amusing anecdotes from every member...including both of the "naughty" dogs, Morgan and Osiris.

"No PC technology has developed as quickly as the jump in PlayStation technology."

Crash. Now we have 40 times the polys and twice the framerate," beams Rubin. "The game always runs at 60 frames per second

Daxter is different? "Because we designed around this from the start. We broke up all our data into usable chunks. The amount



of data for Jak and Daxter would choke up Maya (3D rendering tool used by developers) on the PC if we didn't break it up."

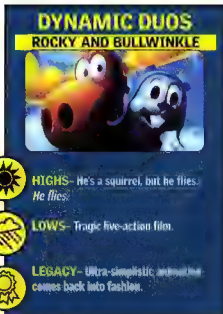
Use Your Time Wisely

By now you've probably flicked to the reviews section to check out the score that we gave Jak and Daxter, and will be unsurprised to see it receiving full marks, despite a few niggles—one of which is that

it's not the biggest game ever made. This, it seems, is intentional though. "It'll take you about five hours to finish if you know exactly where everything is, and that's collecting every single item in the game and scoring 100 percent," Rubin tells us, explaining that only game testers who have played all the way through a zillion times are really capable of this feat. "To give you some perspective, our same testers could

get through Crash 2 in two hours and 22 minutes!" he laughs.

"Shorter games are important these days...people, especially older players, who don't have much free time to play games will make something last a long time just by virtue of their own available time. An average player will need about 10 hours or so to get through Jak and Daxter; that's pretty respectable isn't it?" ■



HARD WORK BUILDS CHARACTER

If you've been following the development of Jak and Daxter, you've no doubt heard about the extensive effort that went into ensuring that the main characters were compelling and appropriate for audiences around the world. Whether you agree with this somewhat clinical approach or not, it's certainly no mean feat; audience tastes—most especially between the U.S. and Japan—can vary drastically. But Naughty Dog

did a remarkable job with Crash, and they were hoping to top themselves with this, their first PS2 effort. Four long months were devoted to character design, with worldwide focus groups chiming in to help refine the characters. It sounded like an exhausting and challenging process, so we went to Sony CEA's Grady Hunt, senior producer of Jak and Daxter, for the behind-the-scenes details.

STEP 1: The Groundwork

As with any project, the design of Jak and Daxter began with the most basic of conceptualization. What may be surprising is that this game has been in the works for somewhere around four years. Initial conceptualization began while Naughty Dog was still working on Crash 2 (it and actual physical work on the game began immediately after Crash Team Racing was completed in mid-1999).

STEP 3: Feedback

"Conceptual sketches of the main character," says Hunt, "were first presented to Sony Computer Entertainment America, Europe and Japan in late March of 2000. From that point on, all three territories were responsible for providing feedback on the sketches." That feedback was culled from a worldwide series of focus groups and brainstorming sessions. "Focus groups are invaluable in the development and marketing process," Hunt insists. "They allow us to focus on modification and polishing, instead of forcing the artists to scrap the whole concept and start over. As with anything else, the more time and information you have, the more likely you are to achieve positive results."

STEP 4: Refinement

After collecting all the feedback from the voice-acting sessions, Naughty Dog went back to the drawing board to make adjustments to the characters. You can see some of the details that contribute to the universal appeal simply by examining a model of Jak: The blue eyes, blond hair and fair skin help the character feel familiar to American and European audiences, while the spiky hairstyle, pointy ears, oversized eyes and sharp, heart-shaped face are strongly reminiscent of Japanese anime characters, and the style of Jak's outfit appears somewhat Japanese. And when it came time to do the voices, a similarly complementary mix surfaced: Daxter's vocal style is purely American slapstick, while Jak's speech consists of monosyllabic, karate-style interjections.

STEP 2: Early Sketches



What may also be surprising to those familiar with character-based games is the fact that the actual character design itself didn't really kick into gear until March of 2000. Naughty Dog had a basic idea of the kind of direction they wanted to move in, and a general notion of the type of activity this character would be engaging in ("He had his move set long before he had a body!" recalls Andy Gavin), but unlike some "mascot" games, it was the gameplay and not the character itself that was of primary concern in the early stages. But they did eventually begin narrowing in on the look that they wanted for all aspects of the game. One element that was decided early on was to have a unified look for all the friendly characters, and a different look for all the enemies. "Notice the pointed ears," says Hunt. "This characteristic appears not just on Jak, but all of the friendly non-player characters. Or take a look at the shape of the jaws of the enemies: They all have the same underbite. This creates a more cohesive and identifiable world."

STEP 5: The Verdict

In July of 2000 the international Jak and Daxter symposium reconvened to review the results of the latest adjustments. Not surprisingly (considering that Crash is one of the best-selling franchises on the PlayStation, worldwide), the responses were quite favorable. "All of the territories were very impressed with the final results," reports Hunt, "and felt comfortable that Naughty Dog had found a way to address the individual needs of the various markets while creating a character with universal appeal." It remains to be seen whether this painstaking approach will translate into sales numbers to rival Crash, but for some reason they don't, it surely won't be for lack of trying.



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<p> Issue 33 June 2000 <i>Four Effect Strategy</i> <i>Demo Discs: playables: X-Men</i> <i>2000 Academy</i>, <i>Thriller</i>, <i>Of Fells</i> <i>WWF Smackdown</i>, <i>Guantlet</i> <i>Bandersnatch</i>, <i>Grind Session</i> </p>	\$10

Issue 34—\$10
July 2000

Original PlayStation 2

PLAYSTATION 2

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2

MLB 2001

Star Trek Invasion

300

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater

Demo Disc playables:
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater
2, Legend of Dragoon,
MLB 2001, Mr. Driller,
Star Trek Invasion

Demo Disc playables: Crash Bash, Incredible Crisis, Jarrett & LaBonte Stock Car Racing, Spyro: Year of the Dragon, UFC, plus Metal Gear Solid 2 video!

Issue 42-\$10
March 2001

Play Station
ISSUE 42
MARCH 2001

FINAL FANTASY X
APRIL 152 DOLLARS
TID
SSX-DVD
W: ANTONIO PONS

Demo Disc playables: CTR: Crash Team Racing, Hot Shots Golf 2, Grind Session, Diamond Tamen

[illegible]

Demo Disc playables:
Final Fantasy VIII
Video previews: Final
Fantasy VII, FFX, FF
Tactics, Klonoa 2, Star
Wars: Super Bombad

Issue 35-\$10
August 2000



Who Wants to Be a Millionaire

Demo Disc playables:
Star Wars Episode I: Jedi
Power Battles, Tenchu 2,
WDW: Magical Racing To


[illegible]

Demo Disc playables:
Madden NFL 2002, Star Wars
Demolition, MTV Sports P
Ride, Mat Hoffman's Pro
BMX, Disney's The Empero
New Groove

sc playables:
nship Surfer,
pike Volleyball,
Hercules Hunt

ic playables: Mat
s Pro BMX
reviews: Disney's
The Lost Empire,
Shadow King,
Don Monkey

Issue 36—\$10
September 2000



Soul Reaver 2

Demo Disc playables: Grind Session, Rayman 2: The Great Escape, Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness, Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX, Tyco R/C Racing

Demo Disc playables:
Driver 2, Spider-Man, The
Grinch, 102 Dalmations,
Army Men Air Attack 2

as: *Con*
di *Evil 2*,
Emperor's
Cave Solid

Demo Disc playables:
Spider-Man 2, X-Men: The Movie, Mutant Academy 2, Earthworm Jim: Explorer, Crash Bandicoot: The Wrath of Cortex, WARPED, Spyro: Year of the Dragon, Twisted Metal: Black

Issue 37-\$10
October 2000

PlayStation
PS2 Surround

Star Wars

Demo Disc playables: Bust Groove 2, RC Revenge, Tea Buddies, Sydney 2000, Muppet Monster Adventure Sno-Cross Championship

Demo Disc playables: Spyro Year of the Dragon, Star Wars Demolition, Crash Bash, Cool Boarders 2001, You Don't Know Jack, Mortal Kombat 3, The Chicken

Issue 46—\$10
July 2001

PlayStation

STREET FIGHTER
DANTE

COMING SOON
TO THE PS2
AND PSX
GROUPS

**TOMB
RAIDER**

Demo Disc playables:
Tomb Raider II, III & Last
Revelation, Alone in the
Dark, Gears Tactics 2

Issue 51-\$10
December 2001

PlayStation

METAL GEAR SOLID 2

PS2 Demo Disc playables:
NBA Street, Kinetica,
Extermination, Gallop
Racer 2001
Video previews: Jak and
Daxter, The Precursor

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REVIEWED

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THE FINAL SCORE



We rate games on a five-point scale. So, .5 is terrible, 2.5 is mediocre and 5 is superb. Get it?

So Much Great Stuff!

The 2002 holiday season sees more great games than ever before

John: The volume of PS2 games hitting stores this holiday season is just incredible. There are so many, and for the first time since I can remember, there's a large number that are really frickin' amazing. Just look at the reviews from the past couple of issues; this has to be the best season for games ever.

Todd: What's most interesting to me is that there still seems to be one game, per genre, that really outperforms the rest. You've got THPS3 and nothing else. There's SSX Tricky and the only thing close to that is the original SSX. I was pleasantly surprised that NFL 2K2 was a nice complement to Madden 2002. They're the same genre, but very different, very good games. I'm hoping that 2K2 vs. Madden situations start to pop up all over for different games.

Joe: It makes you wonder why people bother making games that are clearly nowhere near the level of the "mar-

don't need is another craptacular waste of time like Driven. Gary: I've been in heaven lately. As a big-time RPG fan, I not only like Final Fantasy X, but a wave of new RPGs to look forward to. Take this month's Shadow Hearts, for example. Sure, it doesn't come close to matching the technical achievement or visceral experience of FFX. But even in the shadow of Square's game, it still stands out as a unique, interesting title. In a genre where story counts for so much, RPGs can offer a lot without having to constantly push a system or reinvent a genre.

Clash: I personally can't stand these RPGs that Gary is so bloody fond of. A lot of walking and talking if you ask me. The game I really can't wait for is Soul Calibur 2.

Todd: I really marvel at the range of games that we all play, it's a real testament to the quality. It's almost like the film industry, in a way. I have two hours and \$10, which film am I

"Has this happened before? A string of great games in such a brief period of time?"

quee" games. It seems like the really exceptional games have tried so hard to put so much value in that you're far more likely to keep playing a Tony Hawk or a GT3 than you would be to spend money on a different game.

Chris: I think there are a couple reasons for these wannabes: 1) The developers actually think, almost always wrongly, that they can produce something as good or better than the leading game of the genre, and 2) the companies see a chance to capitalize on the latest thing and take full advantage of it. For every *Jurassic Park* there's straight-to-video crap like *Carnivores*. For every Britney Spears there are droves of lesser midriff-baring blond jailbait.

John: I hope that the real classics will force teams to be more imaginative with what they're creating. Burnout this month is a great example. Criterion came up with a different kind of game and offered an experience that no other game can give you at the moment. I hope the same kind of motivation strikes developers in other genres too. What we

going to see? Surely it won't be the second-rate film, with a second-rate director. I'm going to spend my \$ and time in a way that's valuable. With the current flood of games, I can absolutely play only great games.

Joe: Seriously, has this happened before? A string of great games in such a brief period of time? I don't remember a stretch like this on the PS one, not this broad and this long. I've had at least one great game I've wanted to play every month since July.

Sam: I totally agree with the movie analogy, Todd. But not only because of the quality of the games, but the overall production values. With this holiday season we're starting to see the trend of companies moving toward super-high-budget titles in a major way. MGS2, FFX and GTA3 were all created with multimillion-dollar budgets and years of work. Like real Hollywood movies. The good thing is that now that gaming has matured, companies can throw millions at games and know that if they put out quality, it'll sell.

MEET THE CRITICS



JOHN DAVISON

There aren't enough hours in the day for John to have a life, a job, and Metal Gear Solid 2, SSX Tricky and Grand Theft Auto III. Let's all pity the poor bastard.

FAVORITE GENRES: Racing, Act on Adventure
CURRENT FAVORITES: Metal Gear Solid 2, SSX Tricky, GTA3
CAN'T WAIT FOR: Some time off to play more of these games



JOE RYBICKI

Joe has finally jumped into the digital age and picked up one of those newfangled "instant messenger" doohickeys. If you get the urge, you can find him on AIM as "OPM joe."

FAVORITE GENRES: Adventure, Puzzle, RPG
CURRENT FAVORITES: 007, Splashdown, Smuggler's Run 2
CAN'T WAIT FOR: TimeSplitters 2, Tribes, Mortal Kombat



GARY STEINMAN

With so many fine RPGs coming out, Gary's worried that his head might explode. At least FFX has some voice-acting in it, which will surely give Gary's tips a much-needed rest.

FAVORITE GENRES: RPG, Adventure, Action
CURRENT FAVORITES: FFX, Shadow Hearts, PaRappa 2
CAN'T WAIT FOR: More FFX and all those other fab RPGs!!



CHRIS BAKER

Why do there have to be so many great games out there now?! They're all stealin' C-Bake's time to see *Lord of the Rings* every day and to memorize every *Star Wars* trailer.

FAVORITE GENRES: Action, RPG, Adventure, Sports
CURRENT FAVORITES: Baldur's Gate, Dynasty Warriors 3
CAN'T WAIT FOR: Wizardry, Pac-Man World 2, *Episode II* games



TODD ZUNIGA

Todd's been ignoring his winter reading list. He can't find time since he's only 55 hours into GTA3, he's two skaters away from beating THPS3, and he just started playing Tricky.

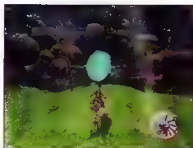
FAVORITE GENRES: Sports, Gangster, Extreme Sports
CURRENT FAVORITES: Grand Theft Auto III, SSX Tricky, THPS3
CAN'T WAIT FOR: Grand Theft Auto 4, NBA 2K2, The Super Bowl



SAM KENNEDY

Having spent weeks working on this issue and helping to launch OPM's new Web site Gamers.com, Sam's looking forward to the holidays. To play more MGS2, of course.

FAVORITE GENRES: Action, Adventure, RPG, Fighting
CURRENT FAVORITES: MGS2, FFX, Grandia II, PaRappa 2
CAN'T WAIT FOR: Soul Calibur 2, VF4, Tekken 4, Kingdom Hearts



Jak and Daxter: The Precursor Legacy

It may not break much new ground, but it breaks the *hell* out of the old ground!

Publisher Sony CEA

Developer Naughty Dog

Web Site www.activision.com

So by now you've read this month's cover story. You've read all about this groundbreaking game, about the time and effort that went into creating it, about the talent involved and the painstaking process of ensuring that this game would appeal to, well, everyone. You've seen the characters; you've seen the screens. One question remains: How does it play?

The answer: Very well, thank you. And really, did you expect any different? After all, the folks at Naughty Dog were responsible for one of the best-selling platform-game franchises in history (that being Crash Bandicoot, just in case you've been living under a rock for the last five years), and Jak and Daxter is a platform game. So it's not like it's some big

surprise that the game is remarkably solid and entertaining.

Let's start with the graphics:

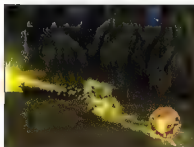
Good lord, is this a beautiful game. The most noticeable feature is, of course, the sight distance. Since this whole world exists on one map, with no breaks in between the different areas, there's this staggering sight distance that really must be seen to be believed. Get to a high place and you can literally see every area in the game. It's the kind of thing that makes you say, "Wow!" Out loud. Several times.

And as for the quality of the art itself, it's really stunning. The style is so lush and detailed that it makes these zillions of polygons look almost like a really high-quality hand-drawn cartoon. The forested areas of the first few levels are nice enough, but just wait until you see the lava levels further into the game. Again, wow.

And speaking of cartoons, I have to mention the impressive animation of all the characters.

Talk to anyone and you'll be treated to a cinema featuring extraordinarily detailed characters with exceptional animation and lip syncing (not to mention the great voices). The characters move in that exaggerated way that's the hallmark of any good cartoon, flowing through their motions realistically and fluidly.

There are a lot of other, subtler touches in the area of graphics, too. For example, check out any of the Precursor runs on any of the levels: They all have this coppery, metallic sheen that you might not notice at first since it looks so nat-



ural. Or take a close look at the lava levels and you'll notice a subtle shimmer from the heat. But you never get the impression that this kind of stuff is gratuitous; instead it seems added for the simple, honest purpose of making the world feel more real. It works.

But enough about the look of the game; I still haven't told you how it really plays. The easy answer is to say "it's great" and leave it at that, but when have we ever taken the easy way out?

It is great, and fun, and entertaining. The best part about the gameplay is the variety. Each area (I keep hesitating to call them "levels" because there are so few clear-cut lines separating them)

features anywhere from five to 10 different missions. These can range from the ultra-simple location-based tasks (find a way to the top of a building) to maddening scavenger hunts (you have to collect seven "Scout Flies" on each level, and some of them are diabolically hidden) to races on your "A RaV Zoomer."

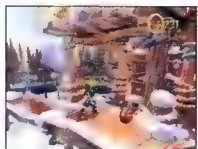
Add to this the sheer variety of locations and the large cast of entertaining characters that carry along the [admittedly somewhat thin] story, and you end up with **lots to do, lots of places to do it in, and lots of people to do it with, for, or to.** Which is, as the kids are saying these days, all good.

However,

Let's not forget that this is Naughty Dog's first truly 3D platformer. And as such, it suffers from many of the same issues that have plagued 3D platformers since the dawn of time (that is, 1996). Let's take them in order (and feel free to sing along if you know the words):

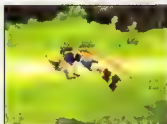
First, the camera. **I will be**

really surprised and gratified once someone comes out with a truly intelligent camera system that makes maneuvering in 3D a breeze. There are many worse cameras than the one in Jak and Daxter, but I wish this one had been a bit more active. From time to time it made the simple combat more difficult than it should have been, and periodically made judging jumps similarly frustrating.

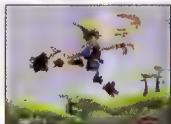


One thing I have to mention here, though: Even if misjudging a jump or your distance from an enemy causes death in this game, it's not a big deal, since you have unlimited lives. That might strike platform fans as a little strange,

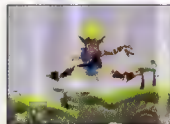
GET THE MOVES TO HELP YOU GET THE GOODS



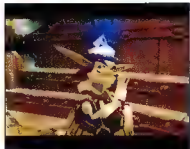
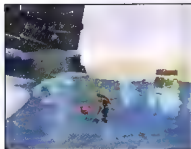
Long Jump: While moving, hold down R1 or L1 to roll, then hit X. This is also the quickest way to travel.



Float: While airborne, rapidly tap the Circle button to spin. This prolongs the jump and also takes out enemies.



High Jump: While standing, hold down R1 or L1 to crouch, then hit X to perform an extra-high jump.

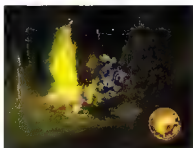


but it works surprisingly well. I didn't ever feel the game was too easy because of it, though the **game as a whole did feel a good bit shorter than I expected.**

And second: the controls. These are generally really tight, but they do cause some problems that I imagine arise from a lack of experience in 3D platform design. My biggest issue is with Jak's punch attack. When he strikes out at an enemy, he lunges forward to do it. Picture fighting an enemy (or breaking a box) on the edge of a cliff and you can probably imagine why this might be a problem. Another control issue seems to arise from the Dual Shock 2's analog buttons: Double-jumping can be sort of hit-or-miss unless you're in the practice of really pounding on the buttons.

Beyond the basic 3D adjustment issues, my only major complaint is something a bit more general and fundamental. See, it's clear that Naughty Dog was trying something new by introducing some basic story elements to the platform formula, and I applaud that. After all, the voice acting is excellent, the characters are entertaining, and having some more explanation for the basically senseless activities involved in platform games is always nice. But I really wish they had stretched their legs a little more with this. **The story, for all its character-driven development, is pretty simple.** There's the poten-

tial for a complex story (most especially with the basis of the Precursor mythology), but no delivery. I would love to see a sequel that complements the platform framework with some more in-depth, possibly RPG-style elements. That's the kind of game I'd drool over, and Naughty Dog certainly has the basis for such a feat with this impressive engine. Let's be honest here, though. These are pretty niggling com-



plaints. **Although I can't stop thinking about how the game could have been better, that's really only because it's so good to begin with.** I don't feel like any of these problems (or even all of them together) are serious enough to knock points off of this remarkably solid game. Sure, it may borrow from just about every successful platform game ever made, but it does it damn well. What more can I say?

Final Score ●●●●●
Joe Rybicki

E Players: 1
Memory Card: 691 KB



18 Wheeler



18 Wheeler

18 Wheeler American Pro Truckster

Publisher Acclaim

Developer Sega/Acclaim

Web Site www.acclaim.com

OK, a truck-driving simulator might not seem like the most exciting thing on the planet, but Sega's 18 Wheeler is quite a fresh change of pace and is totally worth checking out...in the arcades, that is. On the PS2, it's a different story. Even though the game supports the GT Force wheel, 18 Wheeler just isn't the same without that big clunky wheel and horn from the arcade cabinets. Not to mention that there's really not that much to the game and that **the average player will quickly become bored with it.**

That's not to say that the PS2 version should be avoided, though. In fact, I highly recommend the game to anyone looking for a fun arcade experience something along the lines of Crazy Taxi. 18 Wheeler has a great style to it and you really do feel like you're driving a clunky big rig out on the open road. Even the music has a great truck-driving aura about it. **And there is a great deal of strategy involved in the game,** especially as you progress further. You'll have to hit all the time bonuses and master a lot of the speed techniques to make it far.

But because the game can get old really fast, I'd recommend just keeping it as a rental or waiting until it hits the bargain bin.

Final Score ●●●
Sam Kennedy

E Players: 1-2
Memory Card: 223 KB



Burnout

Burnout

Publisher Acclaim

Developer Criterion

Web Site www.acclaim.com

When we saw early versions of this back in May we knew that it had the potential to be something special. Developed by the folks at Criterion, who are responsible for all the magical programs that the developers for Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 and Grand Theft Auto III used to make their games fabulous, **Burnout is genuinely a very pleasant surprise.**

Unlike many other racing games, this isn't just another "pick a car and then race" affair. Sure, it still has you racing, but the hook here is that there are only four cars in the game that are actually racing against each other and the clock. This doesn't sound like too much fun if you don't factor in the fact that the races are held on public roads which are busy with everyday traffic. The result is a **tense, exciting and genuinely thrilling experience** that taps into those emotions that make you just want to let rip when you're out in the "real world," weaving in and out of traffic.

It's not often that a game is more exciting when you're not winning. In Burnout, the most exhilarating place to be is in second place. Weaving in and out between trucks, cabs and family sedans as you hang on the leader's tail is something that few games have managed to capture this well. The game rewards you for fancy driving and encourages you to build up your adrenaline levels by very narrowly missing other cars and driving against oncoming traffic. The

incentive is a brief turbo boost that can assure victory and progression onto yet another of the game's seemingly endless supply of tracks.

There's so much good to say about this game. The feeling that the other cars are truly "aware" of what's going on is quite astounding, and your opponents get incredibly devious as you progress to the later levels. If I have any quibbles it's that the spectacular crash scenes, while impressive, get a little old if you happen to have a couple of accidents back to back—and they can spoil the otherwise perfect flow of the game.

Final Score ●●●●●
John Davison

E Players: 1-2
Memory Card: 124 KB



Burnout



Burnout



Dark Summit



Driven



Dark Summit



Driven

Dark Summit

Publisher THQ
Developer Radical Entertainment
Web Site www.thq.com
 The gaming evolution is upon us, and Dark Summit is the surprising force behind the inception of something never before seen in games: kitsch. This game features such pretentious bad taste that you'll first wonder if the developers are really stupid or really smart. I'll give them the benefit of the doubt because they went with kitsch over sappiness. Instead of the main character being a big-bosomed cliché, she's a smart-mouthed dame with a lot more class (plus a more subtle chest).

Dark Summit separates itself from the likes of Tricky and Shaun Palmer by being story-driven. And it works. Basically you'll uncover such a ridiculous storyline, you can't help but laugh. Remember the X-Files episodes that kept you snicker ing instead of grossed-out? This is the same type of thing.

Right off you might be put off by the moon-like physics that make you feel like you're floating, but it's something you'll get over quickly. Also, the trickiest isn't all that robust, but it gets the job done.

With games like SSX Tricky out on the market, I can't suggest buying this game first. But you might end up liking it more than Tricky in the long run. It's the type of fun that makes you wonder what might come next. Humor's tough to pull off and this does it swimmingly.

Final Score ●●●●
Todd Zuniga

Players: 1
Memory Card: 236 KB

Driven

Publisher Barn Interactive
Developer Bam Studios Europe
Web Site www.bam4fun.com
 Did anyone actually go see *Driven* when it was in theaters? No? Thought not. You know, I can't think of a single reason why you would want to buy this game. Its sort of reminds me of those kids' cartoons where they take a big movie and sanitize it for the Saturday-morning crowd. It's a cute idea, but ultimately you wonder why they bothered.

As a racing game it's a complete joke. It's dull, twinty, boring and it looks terribly plain. Sure it's pretty fast and smooth—but it just lacks any thrill whatsoever. Much like the movie. (So I guess in that respect the team at Bam has done a remarkably good job.)

I'm wracking my brain for something good to say about it, but I really can't think of anything. Does it do anything unique? Um... well, there are some nice crashes, I guess. And your reward for good driving is that everything goes quiet and the screen goes all blurred. This making it difficult to drive well. It's also the first racing game I've played in a long time that has "Yes! What's this?" Racing games circa 1989?

The scope of Driven's mediocrity is so profound I'm almost at a loss for words. Almost, but not entirely, of course. Wait a second though, I'll think of something. Ah, here's one: "crap."

Final Score ●●
John Davison

Players: 1-2
Memory Card: 61 KB



Grand Theft Auto III

The best game of the year? Maybe the best game ever

Publisher Rockstar
Developer DMA Design
Web Site www.rockstar.com
 In the last week I've been a ghost at work. My alternate life has taken hold and during my time away I'll readily admit I've killed dozens of undeserving pedestrians, a handful of loose-lipped stool pigeons, and some undesirables who got what was coming to them. I've stolen countless cars, I've shook hands with the devil, and I've put slugs into the skulls of a few gang leaders. I've been in the hospital, in the lock-up. I've been tracked down by law-dogs I've caroused with a hooker (or two). I've fallen face-first into the seediest world known to man. If man is wise enough to play video games, that is.

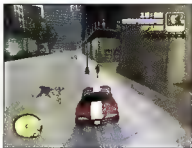
Truth is, I'd rather be playing **Grand Theft Auto III** than writing about it. But I'll take a break to talk up the most innovative, outlandish, brilliant video game I've ever seen. GTA3 is the kind of game that has long-lived in my imagination. It's the game I wish I'd been playing all my life.

I can guarantee that it's like no game you've ever played. There are games like parts of GTA3, but as a full experience, taken all together? Fungettaboutit.



Before I continue to laud this game, let me dispel a myth that might make you overlook it: You don't need to be acquainted with the GTA series to love this game. So don't let that muddle your judgment. I've never played the PS one GTAs, and I don't plan to.

GTA3 is a game that feels like a film. But this masterpiece is



more of an interactive experience than anything else. It may not be the prettiest game on the market, but it is beautiful. Plus, the unique art style is as much a part of the game as jerking some knucklehead from his Ferrari and making it your Ferrari!

Here's how the game works.

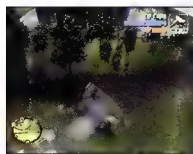
You're a guy on the run from the law. You've been screwed over by your ambitious girlfriend and your only buddy is a fellow jail-breaker named 8-Ball. He leads you to a friend of a friend. Boom, you're working for the mob. That friend of a friend asks you to drive prostitutes and pull a few triggers. Then you're in for good. The game could last forever, and that's yet another element that makes it so special. You can do the wonderfully creative missions, or you can jack an ambulance and get a few hours of community service under your belt. You can swindle a cop car and engage in vigilante missions where you'll put hits on key witnesses. You can purloin a taxi and make a few extra bucks giving rides to the locals. If it's the type of thing that you think, "I wish I could do that in a game," you can do it in this game.

But back to the storyline. You're working your way up the mob ladder, but you must always keep the eyes in the back of your

YOU PLAY NAUGHTY OR NICE?

When I first started playing **Grand Theft Auto III**, I was carefully turning corners to avoid pedestrians, clenching my teeth when I ran red lights, and never bouncing around the city with a baseball bat. Then, my best buddy started playing. He was using the sidewalk as a street and taking bats to pedestrians' heads the way Derek Jeter does to baseballs.

It got me wondering if the games were violent, or the people playing them were predisposed. Eventually we both went on to put gruesome hits on gang leaders and drug dealers and pimps. But along the way I wasn't punishing innocents for just living their lives. Then again, I open doors for old ladies. Question is: How do you play GTA3? Naughty or nice? Tell us at: OPM@ziffdavis.com



head tuned to 20/20. If you don't, something unsuspected will happen. And after you're blindsided and think you're too wise to ever get blindsided again, you're blindsided even harder.

I encourage you to stop reading this review and go play GTA3 now, because I don't have reams of space to explain the subtleties. But I'll give it a shot. First, the major players in the storyline are portrayed by some of the most distinctive voices of TV and film. When you hear them for the first time, you'll recognize them immediately. But fame isn't why these voices are great. They're great because they give depth to the characters you're involved with. They really bring the game to life, again. Another splendid subtlety is arm's length away, your radio dial. When you're driving, you've got a tuner at your command so you can listen to the music you want. Want hip-hop? It's there. Mozart? No problem. Hits from the film *Scarface*? It has a dial all its own. Plus, there are commercials and talk radio that will leave you giggling while you cruise the town looking for trouble. It's something else.

As for the violence aspect of the game, what gangster film doesn't have violence? Rockstar did it right. They weren't willing to weaken the experience so it would fit into what games "were." They didn't pull punches. This splendid adventure is

authentic from the voices to the violence to the free wheeling nature of the game. You're in control of your own destiny in this seedy metropolis. What you do with your free time is up to you. Maybe you'll beat the crap out of a pimp or kill a drug dealer. Maybe you'll drive a cab. Maybe you'll take a nap at your hideout.

As for flaws, there is one that affected my ability to kill the right guy when on foot, trying to put on



a hit: The targeting system often focuses on the wrong guy. A small problem, but a fixable one for—dare I dream—a sequel.

GTA3 is the most fun I've ever had with a game. It belongs in every gamer's collection whether you're hardcore, or you love games, or if you'll only buy one PS2 game in your life. It sets new standards for games. I'm in awe of it. And you will be, too.

Final Score ●●●●●
Todd Zuniga



Dynasty Warriors 3

Publisher Koei
Developer Omega Force
Web Site www.koeigames.com
Though not necessarily the "best" launch game last year, Dynasty Warriors 2 was certainly my favorite to play. The addict ve hack-'n'-slash action, coupled with the strategy involved as your single soldier worked his or her way through droves of enemies amidst an entire battlefield of Three Kingdoms-era China, made the hours expire like they weren't even there. Thankfully, not much has changed for the sequel.

Well, except for the fact that there's simply **more of everything**. More uniquely talented warriors (41 once all are unlocked, not 28), more battlefields (23 as opposed to eight, one of which allows you to mount an elephant), and a slew of new weapons. Along with special items to boost your stats, you can also now power-up your sword, axe or whatever your character's packin' once you collect such upgrades from defeated enemy officers—which can lead to some interesting prebattle decisions. For instance, do you go with the sword that gives you a mighty Attack +10 but nothing else, or the one with no Attack bonus yet -4's in Armor, Musou power and Luck?

But the additions don't end there. Most significantly, a **second player can now jump into the fray, either as an ally or in opposition**. In a way, the one-on-one duels help bring the game full circle with the original Dynasty Warriors (a PS one 2D fighter). And if the multiplayer isn't enough replay value for you, the tough new Challenge

modes will do the trick. Of course, DW3 does suffer from a few imperfections. I was especially disappointed to discover the return of soldiers who mysteriously appear out of nowhere, as well as **ever-present fog and rare yet very noticeable slowdown in parts**. It's also a pain to save your game in the middle of a battle only to have enough time to take a whiz in the time it takes to load back up (believe me—I did it). And story? Nice cutscenes, sure, but otherwise forget about it.

Don't let its shortcomings make you forget about DW3, though. It'll only be your loss.
Final Score ●●●●●
Chris Baker

Players: 1-2
Memory Card: 196 KB



Evil Twin

Publisher Ubi Soft
Developer In Utero
Web Site www.ubi-soft.com
Think of Ubi Soft and platformers and you'll probably conjure up images of cutesy characters hopping and bopping along lily pads. Not anymore. The company's latest offering is no doubt one of the **darkest platformers ever**.

Drawing much inspiration from the works of Tim Burton, Evil Twin is all about style. Characters and environments have a seriously cool, *Nightmare Before Christmas*-esque look to them and the game sports a wonderful cinematic feel. The music is also especially good.

Unfortunately, the game's style also hurts it in a lot of ways. The biggest case is in the area of graphics: They're so absurdly well-detailed that the **framerate can bog down**. Furthermore, the uniquely shaped landscapes create some poor collision detection (you'll quickly become aggravated in certain platform-jumping areas—especially when the game forbids you to change your camera angles). Then there are the subtitles that are illegible due to the game's stylized font. Or the story that, while presented well, is just plain hard to follow.

And the gameplay, which admittedly does have some cool ideas, just isn't enough to compensate for its flaws. It's unfortunate because Evil Twin is such a terrific effort from In Utero. Maybe try renting it.

Final Score ●●●
Sam Kennedy

Players: 1
Memory Card: 111 KB



F1 2001



Frequency



F1 2001



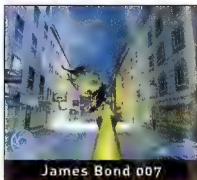
Frequency



James Bond 007



James Bond 007



James Bond 007

F1 2001

Publisher EA Sports
Developer EA Sports
Web Site www.ea.com

I don't know about you, but I've been fairly disappointed with just about every Formula One game since Bizarre Creations last graced us with a game for PS one through *Psygnosis*. For me, *F1 97* was the pinnacle of achievement for this kind of racing. Many of you will probably dismiss this because of the sport it simulates, but for those of you jonesing for a "real" racer, believe me, this is it.

Initially I thought to dismiss this as just another EA Sports annual update. Surely, I thought, it would be last year's game with all the new stats and drivers plugged in. Nope. It's a complete overhaul, and by golly, it's spectacular. Not only is it one of the most beautiful games on PS2 so far, with wonderful camera effects and sharp visuals that mean you can see far enough into the distance to drive "properly," but it also tries to make the sport more accessible. By taking a more typically "video game" approach to the sport, where you have to open up features by achieving set goals, it guides you through the process gently.

Compared to the other choices out there, this really is the cream of the crop. The controls are great, it's exceptionally playable, and if you're a real gearhead you should be very excited. It's so great, I think I may still be in shock. Hence...

Final Score ●●●●●
John Davison

Players: 1-2
Memory Card: 253KB

Frequency

Publisher SCEA
Developer SCEA
Web Site www.scea.com

Oh boy, this is a tough one. *Frequency* is so self-consciously hip it's in danger of not being able to see over its own pelvis. Flashy graphics, cool DJs and a marketing message that's almost painfully trendy. If you're anything like me you've probably been wondering what it's actually about. What's up with how it looks? Is it really a game or is it just a way to make the PS2 more fashionable?

The idea of letting you interactively remix cool music is certainly compelling. If there's a way to try to attract people who aren't normally into games, it's a proven fact that using music as the hook works wonders. The trouble with *Frequency* is that it may be a bit too challenging for its own good.

In easy mode, it's not too tough. The gameplay mechanic is simple to pick up: You just tap the correct button when it passes under the cursor, *Dance Dance Revolution* style. It's fairly forgiving at first and you can noodle your way through all of the available tracks in as long as it takes to listen to them. As soon as you jump to "normal" difficulty, though, everything changes. Beats start kicking in on the two or the three, backbeats throw you for a loop, and you find yourself having to guess what the rhythm you're picking out actually is. The problem is that unlike *DDR* where you're playing along with a song, in *Frequency* you're creating the mix of the song with each button press. If you don't actually know the rhythm of, say, the sec-

ond bassline in BT's *Smartbomb*, you're going to have a problem tapping in time, even with the visual aid that's whizzing by in the psychedelic display that the game serves up.

I'd love to say that this is the perfect party or even the perfect "after clubbing" game, but I'm not sure if it is. The ability to mess around with mixes outside of the gameplay is a nice touch, as aspiring DJs can pretend they're Paul Oakenfold or something. It definitely deserves full marks for creativity, but it's just not as accessible a music game as *PaRappa*, or even *Um Jammer*.

Final Score ●●●●●
John Davison

Players: 1-2
Memory Card: 42 KB



Frequency

James Bond 007: Agent Under Fire

Publisher EA Games
Developer MGM Interactive
Web Site www.ea.com

Chalk this one up as a pleasant surprise. With all the delays and returns to the drawing board that marked the development process of this game, I was expecting one of those stinkers where the designers just got to a point where they threw up their hands and said to each other, "We're screwed. Let's just release it and hope we can break even."

I'm so very glad to report that this is most definitely not the case with *Agent Under Fire*. In fact, it's almost astonishingly competent for a game that's kept such a low profile as it neared its release date.

You play the role of a character

who appears to be sort of an amalgam of 007s; he looks like a cross between Pierce Brosnan and Roger Moore, but sounds like Sean Connery. This works surprisingly well, since if he were modeled after a specific Bond you'd be likely to spend the whole game noting the inaccuracies of the resemblance. Instead, you get to revel in the exceptional character detail, the excellent animation and the professional voice acting.

And as for the gameplay itself: As far as I'm concerned it's every bit as solid as the last big Bond game, the *N64's GoldenEye*. *Framerate* is fast and fluid, graphics are well above-average all around, and there's a nicely balanced mix of stealth and action. [I wouldn't say evenly balanced, though, the game definitely favors action, which is good in my book.]

The only really fundamental issue with the game is its length: It's possible to play through, start to finish, in about six hours. [It should be noted that that is on the default difficulty; advanced difficulty levels can add significantly to the completion time, but also to the frustration level.] However, if you have a pat to play against—or three—you'll find quite a bit more replay value in the well-fleshed-out multiplayer modes.

If you only ever play solo, this may best serve you only as a rental—simply due to its length—but I don't think you'd regret buying it, either. Nice job.

Final Score ●●●●●
Joe Rybicki

Players: 1-4
Memory Card: 90 KB

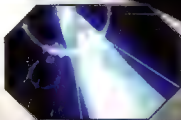
A WARRIOR DAMNED
PAIN HIS ONLY SALVATION

TSUGUNAI

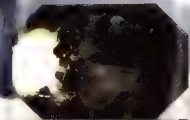
ATONEMENT



CG movies develop the engrossing story line!



Spell-binding graphics and eye-popping magic spells!



Intense combat system immerses you in every battle!



Possess over 12 different characters in the game!



Summon powerful beasts with your magical Runes!

Tsugunai is the story of Reise, a warrior who has inadvertently angered the Goddess of Light by stealing the mystical Treasure Orb. As punishment, the Goddess of Light forever separates his soul from his body unless he atones for his sins by helping the people of Walondia. Without a physical body of his own, the only way to change the fates of the people is to possess them. Will he find redemption in time or will his soul be lost forever?



Violence

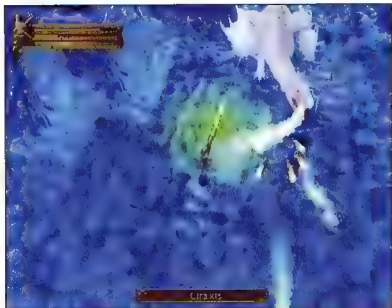


PlayStation 2



ATLUS
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Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance

An action/RPG player's dream

Publisher Interplay
Developer Snowblind Studios
Web Site www.interplay.com
It was a bloodbath. I had hacked and slashed through a gathering of kobolds like a man possessed. Some lay dead on their backs, others face up in a spread-eagle manner, their lifeless hands still strongly gripping their blades. A few more, now headless, died much more quickly. I let my fallen foes be for a while and revisited the area hours later. The pile of pesky humanoid rodents remained just as I had left it.

I've never seen this in a game before. Usually, slain enemies stick around for a second or two, then disappear mysteriously into the Land of the Eliminated Pixel. This is the kind of subtle feature that'll make you think of Baldur's

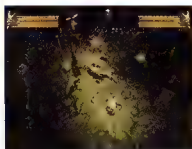
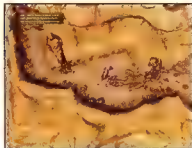
is, the PS2's first offering from the franchise relies entirely upon the hack-n-slash skills of you alone (or also another if you go the satisfying yet flawed two-player route).

As a human archer, dwarven fighter or elfen sorceress, you'll marvel at their overall appearance, their chosen weapons and armor accurately depicted as they traverse the Forgotten Realms, represented through breathtaking graphics. The developers at Snowblind somehow managed to emulate the resolution of a PC game onto any ol' analog TV. You'll find yourself refusing to go to bed just so that you can play on to see the next totally unique environment, be it a sewer, a crypt, a desert mountain, an ice cavern or whatever landscape awaits.

Beautiful special effects only enhance the eye candy, especially the spells and the water, which makes you instinctively pass through it just to see the realistic ripples. It's only a shame that the camera sometimes lets you down and that you can't zoom in.

You do get a nice close-up view of the characters you interact with, though. Their lifelike movements faultlessly complement the first-class voice acting—possibly the best I've ever heard—which syncs perfectly with not only lip movements, but also their gestures.

And, oh yeah. Underneath all the aesthetic perfection stands gameplay that, while nothing new, holds you in a hypnotic trance, adding to the graphics' ability to



make you play for hours at a time. And due to its addictive qualities, **Dark Alliance's 15-hour length just doesn't seem enough.** Fortunately, you've got two more charac-



ters to play as, plus bonuses and the ability to further build the warrior you established.

My only real gripe with **Dark Alliance: Where's the story?** Taking place in three acts that supposedly come together into one master scheme, the result just doesn't make a whole lot of sense (though the grounds for a sequel are basically ground in your face at the end). And your character is just too heroic, not even taking the time to enlist an army when it just plain makes sense to do so.

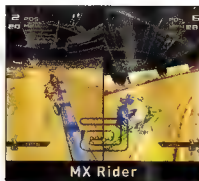
At its heart, though, **Dark Alliance** is just a semi-deep action game, so the story faults are mostly forgivable. They certainly shouldn't keep you from taking a look. Nothing should. Let the bloodbaths ensue.

Final Score ●●●●●
Chris Baker

E Players: 1-2
Memory Card: 341 KB



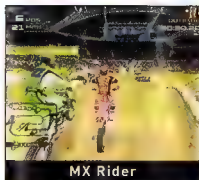
The Mummy Returns



MX Rider



The Mummy Returns



MX Rider

The Mummy Returns

Publisher Universal Interactive
Developer Blitz Games
Web Site universalinteractive.com
Let's get this over with quickly: The **Mummy Returns** is a terrible game, with **poorly designed levels, silly puzzles, horrendous combat** (it sorely needs a lock-on feature!), **awkward control, subpar graphics and icky technical glitches** (it slows down if you, *gasp*, turn a corner!).

Now that's out of the way, I've got a few tips—"secondary objectives," if you will—for all the unlucky stiffos who either bought this game or received it as a gift.

Start out as Rick O'Connell. In the first level, light every torch you can find. Second level: Shatter the glass in all the museum cases. Third level: Only kick your way through combat—no weapons, no punching! Fourth level: Once you stumble upon the first alligator...er, crocodile—take a break and look into the differences between these two reptiles. Fifth (and final) level: Get halfway through and give up.

Now start over as the mummy Imhotep. Use your Soul Spell spell early and often, keeping your joyпад securely in your lap (the vibration is quite thrilling!). Plow through all five levels to the final fight with the Scorpion King, then turn off your PS2 right in the middle of the battle. Smugly declare that you could have beaten this game, but you've got better things to do with your time. Like staring at the wall, wondering why you even bothered.

Final Score ●●
Gary Steinman

E Players: 1
Memory Card: 200 KB

MX Rider

Publisher Infogrames/Atari
Developer Paradigm
Web Site www.atari.com
It's not often that great expectations are placed upon a motocross game—much less one that isn't even an established franchise. But coming from the developer of **Spy Hunter**, **MX Rider** had my hopes up. For the most part, it delivers, offering a fast dirt-bike game loaded with essentials like **great opponent AI, lots of tracks and some nice graphical touches.** I was especially impressed with the mud—it splats right back at the camera when you zoom through a puddle, and you'll also notice it slowly building up on your bike and rider throughout the course of a race. Further, the Championship mode throws in the innovative idea of making tricks actually worth doing in a race, so as to increase your popularity with the fans and score a big-time sponsorship deal.

If only the tricks were fun to perform. Though you won't find larger, better-looking freestyle arenas in any other motocross title, the action taking place in them is simply too hard to master, with, contrary to the actual racing, rather unresponsive controls. Also, **MX Rider's** track design could be better, as each seems a little on the tight side, never bothering to vary itself by widening or narrowing at any point.

If you've had your fill of **MX 2002**, though, give this one a try. **Final Score** ●●●●
Chris Baker

E Players: 1-2
Memory Card: 64 KB

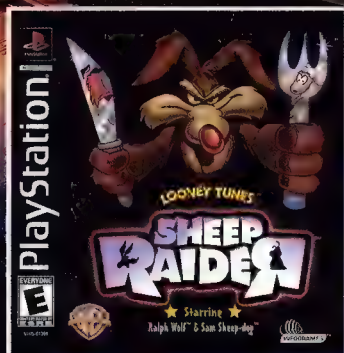
Gate: **Dark Alliance** when you see it in games to come. And such details come in spades with this one, making it the **best Diablo-style action/RPG ever produced.**

And do take note. I said **Diablo-style**. Though the **BG** series has enjoyed great success on PC as the incredibly deep, team-based RPG it

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NCAA Final Four 2002

Publisher 989 Sports
Developer Killer Game
Web Site www.989sports.com
 This game stinks. Last year it stunk. This year it stinks. I'm tired of reviewing this stinky franchise. I'm afraid it'll gunk up my PS2 and make my PS2 stink. I'm afraid you'll buy it and your PS2 will start to stink. This game is a crime because of how stinky it is.

I'm sick of beating up on the stink left by 989 games, but I'm also tired of these franchises hardy improving. Last year this game got one disc on the OPM scale, and this year it's sparsely improved, though infinitely more playable. At this rate, nine years from now we'll be playing a near-perfect version of 989's college hoops on the PS2. Of course, the PS4 will be coming out. Get my drift?

There's a little bit of everything wrong here. No atmosphere, shoddy graphics. Players are constantly doing this strange spin type of thing whenever they pass. The animations are dopey. If you're using the shot meter, you have to perfectly center the ball in the hoop for it to go in.

What's right with this game? Rim physics. And very little else.

If you love college basketball, let me be the first to apologize. I could berate this game for a long while, but I imagine the stink of the Pig-Pen style fumes will keep anyone with healthy olfactory senses far, far away.

Final Score ●●●
Todd Zuniga

E Players: 1-8
 Memory Card: 678 KB

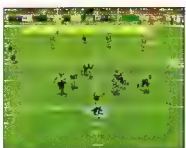
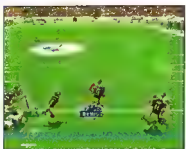


NFL 2K2

Runner-up is a great start for this expansion franchise

Publisher Sega Sports
Developer Visual Concepts
Web Site www.segasports.com
 When the Dreamcast started to crumble in the face of next-gen pressure, I kept my fingers crossed. I wanted Santa to bring the 2K2 series to the PS2 for the holidays. I was hoping Sega's console collapse meant the spectacular DC-exclusive sports titles would scurry from the darkside. Months later, Santa has worked his charms, and Visual Concepts, the wizards of top shelf sports gaming on the DC, are on a mission to take control as the kings of every PS2 sports arena.

I know that everyone who plays console football has one question: How does 2K2 compare to Madden? Patience. Before I get into comparisons and ignite the wick on the EA/Sega sports war, I'd like to

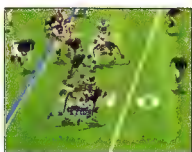


say that, for a first effort on a new system, NFL 2K2 is a definite victory. But, while it's a complete football experience that knifes its way to the endzone, it still misses the last-second field goal, falling short to a tighter, more polished Madden.

With that in mind, understanding that 2K2 is quick and exciting. It's unlike any football game I've played. It's fast, furious and everything that football should be. It's sharply drawn, and the animations are brilliantly executed. Just wait until you pitch the ball to Edge on a sweep. He'll run defenders into the ground with a stutter-step into a spin move or a juke that leaves everyone with their pants down.

OK, so how does NFL 2K2 set itself apart from Madden? There are two things: First, the lack of momentum is the key. If you're running with the ball, you can cut 90 degrees without risk of a high ankle sprain. Ninety degrees may sound ridiculous, but once you make someone miss, it's possible that you'll hate realistic physics. Second, I'm not a football diehard. I love football, but I don't like concentrating on every play like it's fourth-and-Super Bowl. This game really balances that. It's not too sim, and it's not too arcadey. So the medium is struck. Madden is a technical marvel for someone who wants to worry over third-down packages, but 2K2 appeals to the less committed.

Still, there are flaws that drag this game down in the backfield.



The broken tackles start to lose their charm when you can't break more than a few, but on the opposite side of the ball the CPU barrels through your team like a bowling ball through pins. I understand if "The Bus" is going to terrorize my linebackers, but even setbacks like Warrick Dunn will break through Junior Seau more often than never. So that's a frustration that weakens the experience.

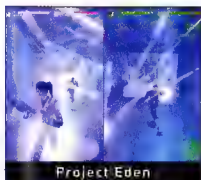
Also, expect to throw a lot of interceptions. I like the idea that a wide-open safety will haul in an errant pass. But sometimes linebackers will make sparkling catches that defy realism. It's not arcadey when that happens, it's a flaw. Also, the Franchise mode is less than stellar. Navigating the menus just to draft a player could lead to plumes of smoke coming out of your ears.

Part of me would play 2K2 over Madden. But it is VC's first PS2 game. Right now it's a step and a half behind Madden. Next year, expect VC to close the gap.

Final Score ●●●●

Todd Zuniga

E Players: 1-8
 Memory Card: 1120 KB



Project Eden

Publisher Eidios
Developer Core Design
Web Site www.eidios.com
 So many games out there rely on your heroics as one particular individual to perform the quest at hand. It's nice to see a game like Project Eden come along to accentuate the concept of teamwork.

As your four special-forces soldiers descend into the lower reaches of a futuristic city that has grown upward instead of outward, they encounter a variety of puzzles keeping them from finding out what happened to some lost construction workers. However, they can only advance with the assistance of the others' unique abilities. For instance, only the hacker Minoko can access computer terminals, while the hulking cyborg (obviously named Amber) can withstand environmental hazards the others cannot. Many great puzzles come about as a result of this necessary teamwork, so in this respect, Project Eden sort of resembles a four-person Ico—only not as pretty and much harder to get the hang of.

Some solid multiplayer modes add to the fun, like deathmatches, co-op missions and even a race between helpful machines called Rovers. You can even play the story mode with others if you like.

But beware: Though it didn't happen to me, some have reported problems of the game crashing. If your version crashes, call Eidios.

Final Score ●●●●

Chris Baker

T Players: 1-4
 Memory Card: 300 KB

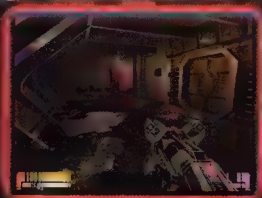
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PlayStation 2



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Shadow Hearts

Shadow Hearts

Publisher Midway
Developer Sacnoth
Web Site www.midway.com
 Wow. Two of the biggest surprises of this holiday season...and both in the same game? Yep. First, Midway quietly publishes its first RPG since, uh, forever. And, to its credit, it's done an admirable job of localizing this Japanese game, giving the text a breezy, conversational tone. Sure, there are a few rough spots here and there—but I'll take a flawed yet lively localization over a technically perfect but lifeless translation any day.

Second surprise: how good this game is! Sacnoth showed promise with *Koudelka*, but its sophomore effort puts this developer in the big leagues. Like *Koudelka*, *Shadow Hearts* sheds the standard fantasy trappings of most RPGs. Set in Asia and Europe in 1913, on the eve of World War I, SH's story mixes elements of imperialism and politics with religion and the supernatural. Yet despite the heady historical and metaphysical themes, the characters speak with a clever Gen-X flair. There's even a refreshing amount of humor, which helps lighten up the otherwise dark tone.

Along with the excellent story,

Shadow Hearts has an engaging battle system that focuses on timed button-presses. Also impressive is the infrequency of combat. Although randomly generated, the battles don't overwhelm you at every step; at some points I even found myself craving more combat. But even if you're a hardcore combat junkie, you'll still get your fix from the challenging but satisfying boss battles.

Shadow Hearts isn't without flaws, though. The graphics, while stylistic, are merely higher-renders versions of stuff we've seen on the PS one. And the battle system is a one-trick pony—albeit a pony that kept me amused to the end. But neither of these issues detracts much from the game.

In fact, *Shadow Hearts*' biggest problem may be the timing of its release. It'd be far too easy for this game to get lost in the shuffle of holiday titles or overshadowed by FFX's January release. Don't let that happen. Play it before FFX. Or after. Just don't miss out on this very surprising, very good game.

Final Score ●●●●

Gary Steinman

Players: 1
Memory Card: 86 KB



Shadow Hearts



Shadow Hearts



Shaun Palmer



Shaun Palmer

Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder

Publisher Activision
Developer UEP Systems
Web Site www.activision.com
 Take a copy of SSX Tricky and a copy of Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3, put them in a blender, hit purée and you'll get...two broken games. Or, buy Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder and you'll get one broken game. Oh, the options!

Before I burst into a frenzy of complaint, know that SPPS is under the rule of the Tony Hawk engine. Maybe you're wondering what I've wondered since this game was announced: How could a free-wheeling, do-what-you-want type of Tony Hawk experience translate onto an angled snow slope? I have no idea. The only answer I'm getting comes from playing this game. And playing this game makes me angry. I know that at some point some kid is going to have \$50, and only \$50, and he's going to buy this instead of other great PS2 games. What a shame with copies of SSX Tricky to be found within the same zip code.

Here's a perfect example why SPPS is angering and less-than-great. You'll be cruising down the mountain in search of different things. In one level, for instance, I was trying to find four photographers to snap pictures of one of my flashy tricks. First off, these guys are no paparazzi. I still haven't found the fourth. But the worst part is that when I do find them, I'm at risk of speeding by without catching these shutterbugs aware. In that case, I have to take me back to the top of the hill.



The Simpsons Road Rage

And that's the worst apology this game makes. It gives you a snowmobile and a ski lift to zap you up to different parts of the hill, but what kind of answer is that? How does that fit in physics-wise? Particularly since it takes exactly zero seconds off the clock. No penalty. I understand it as a game-play element, but I don't like it.

There are reasons to like SPPS, but I'm no snowboarder, so I haven't figured them out yet. It's too scattered and feels poorly designed. Is it Tony Hawk on a snowboard? Dream on, Shaun. Rent this, but don't cough up \$50.

Final Score ●●●

Todd Zuniga

Players: 1-2
Memory Card: 393 KB

The Simpsons Road Rage

Publisher EA Games
Developer Radical
Web Site www.ea.com
 I'm sorely conflicted by this game. Any Simpsons fan will be hooked quickly, because it's hysterical. At last, someone has made a Simpsons game that really capitalizes on the wealth of quirky characters, obscure references and sharp writing. Woooo!

However, it doesn't take long before the whole concept gets old. Real old. Real fast. D'oh!

The problem is not that the game is basically an unabashed Crazy Taxi ripoff. [Don't get me wrong—it is an unabashed Crazy Taxi ripoff; that's just not the problem.] The problem is that the developers lifted only the most superficial elements of Crazy Taxi

and didn't really oother with all the careful design features that gave that game such a high replay value, relying instead on the character recognition and novelty of seeing these familiar locations rendered in 3D. [To be fair, these are powerful features for any fan.]

In other words, as a Simpsons showcase it's fantastic, but as a game it leaves a lot to be desired. For one thing, while the game is broken up into areas that all together are no doubt bigger than Crazy Taxi's two maps, separately the areas seem a bit small. It doesn't take more than a few trips around each area before you feel like you've seen everything, picked up every passenger, and heard every funny line...a few times over. The game combats this by allowing players to open up new areas [necessary but less than thrilling] and new drivers [entertaining but less than useful], but the further you get into the game, the more obscure the references and the less interesting the game becomes to anyone but the most diehard fans.

It also doesn't help that there are loads of graphical glitches, a seemingly random dispersal of infinitely spawning passengers, and an equally random (and often utterly nonsensical) selection of sound bites for all, but a select few of the characters. It's likely that non-fans just won't have much reason to play.

Final Score ●●●

Joe Rybicki

Players: 1-4
Memory Card: 90 KB



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Smuggler's Run 2

Smuggler's Run 2: Hostile Territory

Publisher Rockstar
Developer Angel

Web Site www.rockstargames.com
With the original Smuggler's Run having looked so great at the launch of the PS2, it's almost surprising that this sequel manages to look significantly better. But it does, at least in a lot of little ways, and boasts a healthy assortment of additional improvements, to boot.

First let's talk about those graphics: While the basic engine isn't that drastically different, the levels suddenly look so much more lush and realistic. This is most noticeable when you start doing missions in Vietnam, where you'll barrel through fields of little purple flowers or dense thickets of bamboo. Here you'll also start missions at different times during the day: the ones set right around sunset are particularly gorgeous.

Weather effects are introduced in a big way by one of the earlier levels in which the rain is so dense you will literally find yourself squinting as you would in a real rainstorm. In fact, here's a true story about that level. That ended up being the first mission I had serious trouble with, and after playing for maybe an hour, I looked up and was genuinely surprised to find that it was sunny outside.

That's something I really dig about the graphical power of the PS2. But this story touches on the biggest complaint about SR2: It is really freaking hard. Holy hell. And you thought the first one was tough. Some players will without question find that the game gets pretty frustrating after maybe the

first 10 missions. I appreciate the challenge—it adds to the play time—but I think they went a little bit overboard here.

My only other real complaint arises from the level design. The level layouts just don't seem to interest me quite as much as in the first game. They make up for it with the time-of-day and weather stuff, but it can still get monotonous after hours of play.

Nevertheless, the new features (most especially the new vehicles and the addition of defensive countermeasures) make this worth buying even if you own the original. It's a blast.

Final Score ●●●●●
Joe Rybicki

ESRB **T** **Players: 1-2**
Memory Card: 376 KB



Smuggler's Run 2



Smuggler's Run 2



Soldier of Fortune



Soldier of Fortune

Soldier of Fortune

Publisher Majesco
Developer Raven/Pipe Dream
Web Site www.majesco.com

As a game that was originally created to run on reasonably powerful PC machines, Soldier of Fortune doesn't translate all too well to the console platforms. And it's not because the PS2 can't keep up in the visuals department (in fact, the PS2 version actually looks a bit better than its PC counterpart in certain respects), but rather because the game was designed with the PC's hardware in mind—a much different architecture.

Because of this, we're treated to some glitchy graphics on the PS2 version, not to mention some really annoying load times. And I'm not just talking about loading at the beginning of missions either. Soldier of Fortune will actually just freeze up in the middle of a level to load in new data. Not only does it seem odd and clunky, but this severely breaks up the action.

All this loading does come for a reason, though. Soldier of Fortune features some very detailed levels and some truly exceptional action sequences. For example, you're treated to such memorable scenes as running down NYC subway tracks with trains whizzing by, or ducking through back alleys of Tokyo taking out members of a crime syndicate. It's really cool stuff, and it helps set this game apart from the typical "run through the levels and just shoot lots of aliens" first-person shooters.

Another thing that really sets this game apart is its rather obscene reliance on gore. Soldier of Fortune really tries to empha-

size the gritty aspects of being a hired mercenary, so things like blood splattering on walls and limbs flying are all commonplace. It can get almost chilling at times, though, when enemies cry out in pain as you fill them with lead from across the room.

With Amazing stuff like Half-Life and Red Faction already on the market, though, Soldier of Fortune is a game that you might want to check out only after you've already seen those first. Not even its wealth of multiplayer modes can save it—especially when you consider TimeSplitters 2 is right around the corner.

Final Score ●●●●●
Sam Kennedy

ESRB **M** **Players: 1-6**
Memory Card: 284 KB

Splashdown

Publisher Infogrames/Atari
Developer Rainbow

Web Site www.atari.com
Since ATV Offroad Fury (also developed by Rainbow Studios) was such a seemingly out-of-nowhere success, I was anxiously awaiting this game. And no, not just for the water effects.

OK, the water effects did have a lot to do with it. And oh man, does Splashdown deliver! I have never seen water this realistic in a video game; it moves as fluidly as you'd expect water to move, throws up spray in a most convincing fashion, and generally acts like water should—I don't know how better to explain it. The boys over at Electronic Gaming Monthly have their newfangled GameCubes and Xboxes, so I've seen their respec-

tive water-based games in action. Trust me: They don't come close.

Oh yeah, and there's a game here, too. A really fun, really fast, really challenging racing game. The best thing to compare it to, really, is ATV, since it shares a lot more in common with that game than any other. One thing that Splashdown does much better than ATV, though, is its trick system. Whereas ATV threw in an extra trick-only mode, Splashdown forces the player to keep up a string of tricks throughout a race. Doing so maximizes the performance of your Sea-Do, which deteriorates over time.

And so, in a sense, Splashdown is a deeper game than ATV, but by the same token it's also somewhat narrower, both literally and figuratively. For one thing, ATV had that spectacular cross-country racing mode that really gave you an amazing sense of space and distance. Splashdown doesn't really have anything like it. I also found Solashdown's courses, being of necessity somewhat flatter than ATVs, to be a bit less interesting overall. So, if I had to buy just one I would probably pick ATV, and unless flashy, system-showcase graphics would seal the deal for you, I'd suggest doing the same. But if you already own ATV, or if you have the coin to buy both, by all means do so. I'm sure you won't be disappointed; they're two of the better racers on the system. And that's saying quite a lot.

Final Score ●●●●●
Joe Rybicki

ESRB **E** **Players: 1-2**
Memory Card: 87 KB

www.espnthegames.com

IT JUST HAPPENS TO BE ANYTIME AND ANYPLACE.



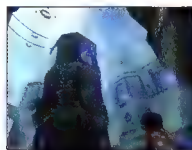
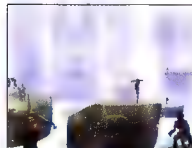
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PlayStation 2



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Soul Reaver 2

What's there is good, but there's not that much there

Publisher Activision
Developer Neversoft

Web Site www.activision.com
"That's a lot of chat, isn't it?" So says Simon Templeman, the voice of Kain since the first Blood Omen in 1996. He delivers the pronunciation, utterly deadpan, in the voice-session outtakes that open up once you complete Soul Reaver 2. The room cracks up, but it's only funny because it's true. So sadly true.

See, the problem with Soul Reaver 2 isn't that the gameplay is terrible. **The problem is that there just isn't much gameplay there.** A sweeping, time-jumping, mind-twistingly complex and deathly serious story is told through a huge collection of cinemas and voice-overs, and in between is...not much.

But that story—wow. Yeah, it has a lot of chat, but it also has a lot of really interesting insights

into the blossoming Nosgoth mythos. If you were a fan of the original Blood Omen, you'll take particular pleasure in the revisiting of familiar locations and interaction with familiar characters through the *Back to the Future*-esque time-travel loops.) And this ultra-heavy story is delivered through **peerless voice acting by some real, accredited talent, accompanied by what is probably the most lifelike lip syncing I've ever seen from a computer-generated character** And though it's a pretty over-the-top dramatically (OK, really over-the-top), at least there's some thought and intelligence behind the complex writing. The story deals with issues of trust and manipulation, free will and destiny, time and paradox. It's all pretty deep, philosophical stuff, and if you're into that sort of thing (most especially if you're

into that sort of thing as delivered by the undead), you will get a kick out of the games the story plays with the established legacy. (It must be said, though, that the very end isn't much more satisfying than the last game. Much gets resolved, but there are some confusing hints and loose ends that remain untied.)



But think about how much I've just narrowed down the group of people who are likely to have the experience necessary to really appreciate this game: First, to really "get" what they're doing here, you have to have played the first Legacy of Kain all the way through. Of that fairly small subset of gamers, you also have to be pretty into philosophies of the nature of time, destiny and free will. I happen to fall into the resulting group, but I really have to wonder how much company I have in this subset of a subset.

Of course, the game isn't *all* story. **There are four and a half major puzzles that must be solved to beat it.** Yeah, you read right: exactly four and a half puzzles. You activate three elemental forges for the newly empowered Soul Reaver blade,

get into a castle, then quickly open up one more forge (that's the half-puzzle; it's much easier and more limited than the others) and...that's it. Now, don't get me wrong—the first four are pretty serious, drawn-out puzzles. In fact, they're difficult enough that I was getting really annoyed at first, until I realized that my puzzle-solving skills had simply atrophied from lack of use, and began to really appreciate the fact that **Soul Reaver 2 genuinely challenges its players** in this respect, more so than in the original Soul Reaver. You won't find many push-the-block or flip-the-switch puzzle elements here. Like with the high-brow story, it's refreshing to not feel like I'm being babied.

Technically there are no complaints, either: Graphics are gorgeous, control is solid, and the camera doesn't get too frustrating. So...good story, good puzzles, good graphics—what's the problem? Well, my friends, the problem is that there just isn't much else other than a whole lot of walking and a whole lot of talking. Sure, there's combat, and it's actually significantly more complex than in the last game. Raziel has a wider range of attacks, and the Soul Reaver blade itself also adds some complexity: It gains power with each enemy you dispatch, but once it reaches a critical point it begins to drain health, so it must be used sparingly and strategically. Plus, the enemies are smarter and more plentiful; if you were to kill every enemy you came

across, you'd probably double the time it takes to beat the game.

The trouble is this: **There is absolutely no motivation to fight unless you are backed into a corner and have no other choice.** With very few exceptions, the only benefit you get from combat is health, and the only way you lose health is—can you guess?—combat. So if you're full up on health, you're much better off just running like a scared little girl whenever you get the chance. And if you're not full up on health, you can always shift to the spectral realm, devour some of the souls hanging around there, and shift back. It doesn't



exactly make for compelling gameplay.

Still, I can't completely dismiss the game, because if you are the kind of person who gets into stories like this you will be in heaven. But when it came right down to it, I would almost rather have just watched all the cinemas—or read a book. Let's hope Blood Omen 2 is better.

Final Score ●●●

Joe Rybicki

Players: 1
Memory Card: 119 KB



FULL-FRONTAL FEAR.

Celebrate the 5th anniversary of the most terrifying game series ever. Join Claire Redfield, as she searches for her missing brother, Chris, and digs deeper into the evil doings of Umbrella Corp. Flesh eating zombies and bio-tech monstrosities haunt Claire's every move. As an added bonus, this special edition includes Wesker's Report. This exclusive DVD gives you a horrific retrospective glimpse into the mind of the mysterious Wesker and the terrifying events of Resident Evil.



Blood and Gore
Violence

CAPCOM

RESIDENT EVIL CODE: Veronica

PlayStation 2

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Supercar Street Challenge

Publisher Activision
Developer Exact Entertainment
Web Site www.activision.com
 Racing games, we're assured by Activision's effusive rep, account for 20 percent of PS2 games sold. Hence the recent onslaught of games allowing us to whiz around in anything with wheels, no doubt. Little or no consideration on seems to be made of the fact that Gran Turismo 3 also probably accounts for about 20 percent of PlayStation 2 games sold up until recently, but this would doubtless mess up the reasoning. Never mind, though... SSC is a racing game, and like so many others, it's a racing game with a "unique" hook: concept cars. If you're anything like me and you pore over images of sports-

mobiles set to arrive in the near future, this is fairly and squarely aimed at you. If you've ever oogled at the Paganí Zonda, Lotus M220 or even Saab's outrageously butch S7, now's your chance to cruise around in them. If there's a little redneck in your system you'll be positively overjoyed that the Pontiac GTO concept from last year's Detroit Motor Show is also in here too.

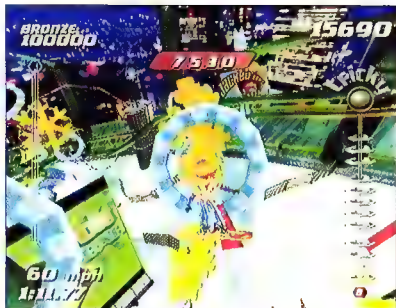
With all this fabulous hardware, it's a shame that none of them really look that good. Whereas GT3's models are beautifully crafted and look solid and almost believable, the cars here have a Hot Wheels quality about them that spoils what should be the best thing about this game.

As a racing game, it's pretty much par for the course. You race, you win, you open stuff up... seen it before, thank you. The cars behave fairly well, but are way too "grapy" to be believable. Power-sliding seems to be an almost automatic function of applying the brakes and does little to alleviate the arcade feel of the whole thing.

A surprisingly compelling aspect of the game is the editor where you can custom build your own cruiser. Some outrageously Batmobile-like contraptions are possible (although all of them seem to have big, cheezy-looking outcrops with little or no effort, and sadly I think I actually ended up spending more time with this than I did with the game itself).

Final Score ●●●
John Davison

Players: 1-2
Memory Card: 146KB



SSX Tricky

"It's tricky. Tricky, tricky, tricky." C'mon, sing along. No?

Publisher EA Sports Big
Developer EA Canada
Web Site www.ea.com
 It's been out a while already, I know. We're a little bit late with our review on this one, and for that I apologize. Fortunately this isn't a case of us slipping up and having to say, "D'oh! Sorry guys, that one's actually crap. Should've mentioned that earlier."



Nope, contrary to early reports that this was just SSX with a few leftover bits stuck on to make a fast buck, Tricky is so good that it will no doubt eat away at your time much the way the first one did. There's a good chance that many of you are aware of this already, but for those of you holding out for a possible holiday gift, rest assured, it's worth it.

While it's hard to say that this is a full-on sequel to the first game, it's certainly a lot more than I think any of us thought it would be. Just about every area of the gameplay has been overhauled. It feels better; the tracks have all been redesigned; there are new courses, new music, new characters, new tricks, and a lot of the gameplay structure has been overhauled to make things more apparent to even the most

casual gamer. The trick books, for example, which you need to work your way through if you want to open up every possible feature in the game, are now divided into "chapters" that make your progress through them far more intuitive.

But what about the new stuff? The most obvious additions are the two new tracks: Garibaldi, which is the new opening track, is much simpler than the others on the circuit. It's fast, fairly short and gives you plenty of opportunity to mess around with some tricks without having to do anything too fancy. The other newbie, Alaska, which kicks in much later in the circuit, is fast, steep and features some spectacular jumps and multiple routes. SSX fans here at OPM are particularly enamored with this one, as it's a real treat both in single and multiplayer modes.

It's not just the new tracks that'll get fans of the previous game excited though; all of the tracks from SSX have been thor-

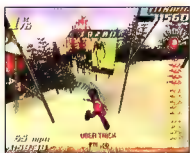
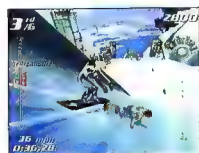
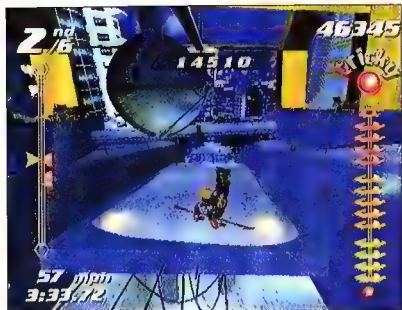
oughly reworked and I have to say that all the changes make for a much more balanced game.

Some of the craziness that occasionally cropped up on tracks like Elysium Alps has been reworked to make the gameplay smoother. Players coming to Tricky as their first experience of SSX will never have a clue that in the previous iteration you were, on occasion, fated with a wall of glass completely blocking your path. My favorite redeveloped track is the Tokyo Megaplex which is now a crazy roller-coaster ride with zillions of pipes and bars to grind on, as well as crazy fans who shoot you up in the air, giving you plenty of opportunity to pull off some truly ooony tricks.

As has been widely publicized, the characters are a much bigger deal than before. The most popular oldies are back, and there are a number of new characters each boasting some "interesting" characteristics. If you're a regular reader of OPM you'll know that many of these characters are now

DVD EXTRAS

Hopefully set to be a new trend for PS2 games, SSX Tricky features a host of DVD extra features which show you behind the scenes at EA Canada. There are documentary-style shorts about the creation of the game, the voice actors recording their lines, character development and course design. A lot of attention is also paid to the music in the game, and you can sit back and watch a brief interview with Mixmaster Mike as he talks about his inspiration as well as listen to all of the game's major tunes. If you're a fan of DJ or electronic music, you're in for a treat. Joining Mixmaster Mike's war are tracks from BT, Hybrid, Aphrodite, Plump DJs and then of course there's Run DMC's "Tricky" that serves as the main theme for the game.



voiced by glamorous and beautiful Hollywood types like David Arquette, Macy Gray, Lucy Liu, Billy Zane and a bunch of others I forget. Does their presence make one iota of difference? Well...no. For a start, you can hardly tell it's them. I mean, honestly, could you pick out Billy Zane's voice if he left a message on your answering machine? I know I couldn't. The most distinctive voices in the game are actually JP and Moby. Both voiced by EA Canada guys and not famous folk. I'm not dissing the use of the talent; in some ways you could argue that the fact you can't tell it's them is a good thing. But I'm not going to go into that here—it would be far too involving and frankly, I'm not sure whether it would just sound like a load of b.s. or not. The voice work, irrespective of who it is who's chattering, is good. It really helps accentuate one of the other big developments of Tricky, and that's the relationship between the "stars." If you knock an opponent over, they get pissed at you and are more likely to throw insults your way, or even single you out and hunt you down in later races. It's not a major part of the gameplay, but it really helps make you feel more immersed in the whole experience.

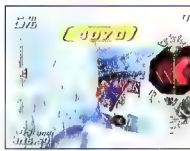
One of the most motivating factors of the gameplay, aside from winning gold medals in everything, is the feature that the

game takes its name from. As with the first SSX, performing tricks builds up adrenaline which can be used to boost you forward like a kind of turbo. Fill your boost gauge all the way up to the top, though, and you turn "tricky" (complete with Run DMC sample of same). Once in this mode, you can perform "uber tricks" which involve doing crazy things off the board—like using it as a helicopter rotor or something to sit/lie/jump/handstand on. Pull off enough of these and I'll up your "tricky" gauge, and you're blessed with infinite boost for the remainder of the race...something that can assure victory.

I can't begin to explain how additive I found this. I played the original to death, and this offers far more of a challenging experience, and should you choose to try to open all of its goodies up, it offers a seriously lengthy challenge. I'm hooked.

Final Score ●●●●●
John Davison

Players: 1-2
Memory Card: 140KB



Tarzan Untamed

Publisher Ubi Soft
Developer Ubi Soft

Web Site www.ubisoft.com
First, the good news. Rosie O'Donnell does not provide the voice of Terk the gorilla in Ubi Soft's playable sequel to Disney's 1999 animated feature. Now, the bad: Her replacement is all too competent of a replacement.

Fake, annoying celebrity voices aside, though, Tarzan Untamed offers a diverse platformer that, while only taking six hours or so to play through the meat of the game, provides some solid entertainment while it lasts. Though basically on rails like Sony's 2.5D Tarzan game a couple years back, this one usually moves in a more forward direction, as you try saving Jane from poachers by performing your typical Ape Man tricks—vine swinging, tree surfing, yelling out your signature call for help, etc.

But Untamed's true fun lies in its extreme sports-type levels, like surfing down a croc-infested and whirlpool-laden river, bungee jumping in order to impress your primate buds, and, best of all, water skiing with a bird as your motorboat, a vine as your jne, and bare feet as your skis.

You can also add a little life to the game by taking on "Terk's Challenges" for each level. Just remember to turn the sound down so that you don't have to listen to the all-too-good Rosie sound-alike more than you have to.

Final Score ●●●●●
Chris Baker

Players: 1
Memory Card: 79 KB

Thunderstrike: Operation Phoenix

Publisher Eidos
Developer Core

Web Site www.eidos.com
Helicopters are amazing machines, when you think about it. But all that power and versatility comes at a price, and that price is control, this ain't like driving a car, that's for sure. The whole control scheme here seems counterintuitive, and the added bonus of having the pitch of your "copter" next-cably related to your speed is just hard to get used to, especially if you've played a lot of standard flight sims.

This would be fine if the designers of Thunderstrike seemed to want to make the effort to make this complex control scheme more accessible to novices, but they don't seem to have done that. Consequently,



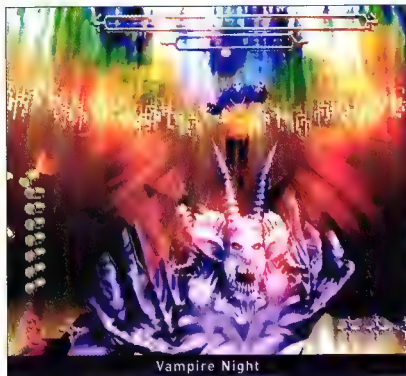
I spent a lot of time spinning in circles and flying in the wrong direction, and the most frustrating thing was that I never seemed to get any better at it.

On top of all that, the game's riddled with weird inconsistencies and balance issues. Why is it that I can fly into the side of a mountain with little effect but take major damage from small trees? Why is it that I can be pummeled by enemies who show up neither on my screen nor my radar? And while we're at it, why does the game look like crap? The sight distance is a joke, and the environments are ridiculously bland. This whole game has given me a headache.

Final Score ●●●
Joe Rybicki

Players: 1
Memory Card: 82 KB





Vampire Night

Vampire Night

Publisher Namco

Developer Wow Entertainment

Web Site www.namco.com

Apparently, the blinding ultraviolet rays emitted from the fluorescent orange color of the Guncon 2 aren't quite powerful enough to substitute as the sunlight needed to kill a vampire (just barely, I'm sure). Instead, Vampire Night requires you to actually pull the trigger in this straightforward, short, yet ultimately fun arcade port

You've seen it before: You and a friend basically snoot the crap out of anything for the 40 minutes it takes to play through the game's six levels. Though cool concepts do exist, like RPG elements (buy, sell or earn helpful items) and shooting off the vampire seeds of villagers (miss the shot and they become vampires themselves), you don't

get the same high-speed exhilaration as a Time Crisis II, nor the "party" feeling of a Point Blank.

And since Vampire Night is a port of a supernatural shoot-out developed by a Sega studio, companions to the House of the Dead franchise are inevitable. Unfortunately, the most immediately recognizable commonality this bloodless offering bears lies in the House series' most infamous trait—horrible, laughably bad dialogue complemented by even worse voice acting.

Really, though, what do you expect? Run-of-the-mill as this game may be, it's still good for some rental quality good times.

Final Score ●●●

Chris Baker

Players: 1-2
Memory Card: 35 KB



Vampire Night



WWF SmackDown! Just Bring It

Has wrestling had its day in the sun?

Publisher THQ

Developer Yuke's Interactive

Web Site www.thq.com

Maybe it's that I've fallen from the wrestling bandwagon. And because of this proverbial falling I've stopped concerning myself with why The Rock is pissed at Kurt Angle or whether or not Kane and The Undertaker are still brothers. Maybe the falling from the bandwagon dented my proverbial skull and that's why the fascination of the bra-and-panties match between Trish Stratus and some other slattern bombshell still has the zip to command my attention, but not enough electric ty to make me watch wrestling every Monday or Thursday night. Ultimately, this proverbial bandwagon-leap and skull dent may be the reason the latest rendition of SmackDown! strikes me like a lump spaghetti noodle rather than a knockout signature move

Really, die-hard wrestling fans will love this game. It's going to fly off the shelves and wow the same crowd that answers "How high?" to Vince McMahon's "Jump!" The graph-



ics will be a hit and the arena enhancements really make the crowds come to life. Still, Jericho's hair will make you chuckle. It looks like a tattered sheet of garlic bread.

I expect the rest of you—who have outgrown Vince McMahon's false promises and the nursery rhymes of the Ped gree and the Stone Cold Stunner—to agree that this game falls flat

With SmackDown! Know Your Role, gamers were led through a complex career mode that felt like the real WWF. Though there were flaws (like rare title shots), it felt like a wrestling season. You'd match up against different wrestlers, there'd be a backstage attack, and special matches would be set up. With this new game, the Story mode is now so simple and short, it's not worth the time it takes. It's the game's Achilles Heel, and offers the type of depth you'd expect on Atari, not the PS2. Think about it: Watching the WWF is fun because of the soap opera aspect. Who's screwing over whom? What rivalries are brewing? All of

these questions are never asked in Just Bring It. Instead, you start the Story mode, have a brief chat, and find yourself in a match to be the No. 1 contender. If you win the match, you get a title shot. If you win the title match, the game is over. And you've won!

Yep. That's it. Party's over. You don't have to go home, etc., etc. You unlock something new every time you win the title, but who cares about the title? What about the rigmarole to score a title shot? If I'm going to be won over and brought back to the



time-zapping darkside of the WWF, I need story. And this doesn't have it

You'll find lots of wrestlers, gazillions of matches and plenty of environments. There are great things at work here, but with such a lame story mode, it doesn't get off the mat for non WWF junkies.

Final Score ●●●●

Todd Zuniga

Players: 1-4
Memory Card: 4 MB

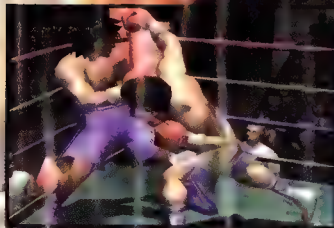


PlayStation 2

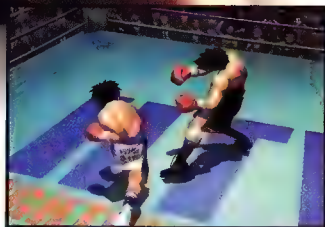
Smash! Hit!

VICTORIOUS BOXERS

IPPO'S ROAD TO GLORY



Play as Ippo or any one of 43 other boxers. Fight your way to the top of the rankings. With 10 locations and 7 matches in 4 weight classes, you'll create your own awesome 1-2 combination.



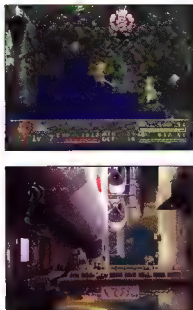
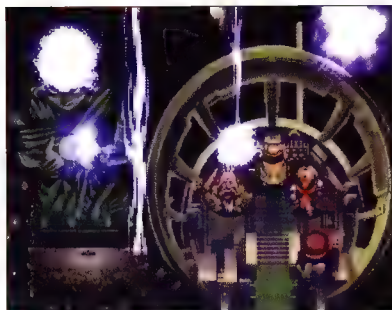
Based on the best-selling Japanese comic book "Hajime no Ippo"



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Arc the Lad Collection

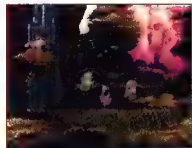
The ultimate collector's item for any serious RPG player

Publisher Working Designs

Developer G-Craft/Sony

Web Site workingdesigns.com

In Japan, where RPGs can make or break hardware platforms, Sony needed something special for the release of the original, PlayStation back in 1995. And because Square was still very much buddies with Nintendo at the time, Sony did the next best thing: They called upon Front Mission creators G-Craft to come up with a new strategy RPG for their console, Arc the Lad. Pressed to get the game out in a short time though (so RPGers would have something to play), G-Craft decided to release it in two parts. Arc 1 would essentially be the introduction and Arc 2 would be the main game. Which is why Sony, who made an attempt to bring Arc 1 here in 1996, ultimately realized that it wasn't enough of a game to stand on its own.



And I'm assuming since the original never made it here, Sony simply opted not to bring over any of the subsequent Arc games either. Thus, I don't hold against them—the U.S. has been its big 3D cinematic-RPG kick for the past couple years, so these games, individually, may have very well been overlooked.

But picking them up and packaging them all together was a brilliant move on the part of Working Designs. On their own, the Arc games—especially the original—might not be worth paying full price for, but as a package, this is hard to beat.

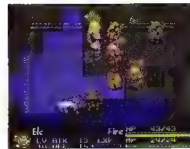
Take, for example Arc 1. The game is extremely linear and extremely short. Yet at the same time it's extremely fun. It's a perfect introduction to the Arc series, giving players a good bunch of battles to hack away at. Surprisingly, it's also really good-looking despite being six years old (!). Since Arc 1 is 2D-based, it has aged really well, and it's pretty clear that G-Craft developed the game with the intention of showing off how good 2D could look on a 32-bit console.

Arc II then picks up right after part 1 lets off (which kind of just stops abruptly) and continues the story—but with a twist. You start off with a new hero, whose path then crosses with the main hero's later on. Thankfully, Arc II feels a lot more like a complete RPG—there's a lot more of the traditional RPG exploration, stat building and weapon collecting that's missing in the original and the quest itself is several hours longer.

Then there's Arc III, which is a bit of a departure from the first two games with a 3D graphics engine and more realistic character designs. I didn't like the style of Arc III as much as the previous two titles, but some of its new innovations (such as the monster-card summons) in the battles keep things fresh.

What really makes Arc the Lad

Collection work as a whole, though, is how everything ties in together. I love the fact that you're able to carry your game saves from one game to another—it really helps make things feel like a complete package. In addition, the battle system used in all three games is excellent. Each game has its own little variations,



but the overall feel remains constant. The music is also stellar throughout (with certain tracks repeated in all three).

I should also mention that the Arc Arena monster tournament disc, where you can pit your captured creatures from Arc 2 against others, can be fun to toy around with for a while and the Making of Arc documentary really rounds out the package.

I'm really amazed just at how much there really is to this collection. Sure, the games may be a tad dated and can get a little boring at times, but a lot of the gameplay you can get out of this package, especially for its reasonable price, makes this an RPG fan's dream come true.

Final Score ●●●●●

Sam Kennedy

Players: 1
Memory Card: 1 block



Gunfighter



Martian Gothic



Gunfighter



Martian Gothic

Gunfighter: The Legend of Jesse James

Publisher Ub Soft

Developer Rebellion

Web Site www.ubisoft.com

Nothin' like making a hero out of one of American history's most infamous mass murderers! In Gunfighter, Ub Soft puts you in the boots of Jesse James on a decidedly historically inaccurate quest to save his lover/cousin (we aren't told the latter part) from outlaws (well...other outlaws), proving in the meantime that it is indeed possible for companies other than Namco to produce light-gun games. Sure, it's a decidedly mediocre light-gun game, but you're still likely to enjoy it for the most part.

To look at Gunfighter, though, you probably wouldn't guess it's a 2001 release—ugly graphics like these make it look like Ridge Racer and Warhawk look PS2-quality. Slightly making up for this is the fact that gameplay involves a little more than a static screen with stuff that pops out to shoot; you also have to seek cover to avoid fire (think Time Crisis). If only it weren't so friggin' hard. Not only does it seem nearly impossible to know when to dodge fire by level 3, but an in-game timer only exacerbates the difficulty. A second player could have improved things, too.

I'll give Gunfighter credit for being longer than your typical light-gun shooter—I just found it too hard to enjoy after a while.

Final Score ●●●●●

Chris Baker

Players: 1
Memory Card: 1 block

Martian Gothic: Unification

Publisher Take 2 Interactive

Developer Creative Reality

Web Site www.take2games.com

It's taken a full year and half for this \$10 survival-horror title to hit shelves, yet, surprising as it may be, it appears the extra time has done some good, resulting in one of the best budget titles released thus far. Despite graphics inferior to the original Resident Evil, not to mention a control scheme that emulates it to an even more atrocious result, Martian Gothic manages to equal—maybe even surpass—Capcom's influential classic as far as sheer adventure gameplay is concerned. The game's puzzles simply make more sense than your typical survival-horror fare, with its three-person teamwork aspect adding considerable depth (if not a bit of tedium, as well).

MG's story and plentiful voice-acting also impressed me, especially considering the former's reliance upon verbal log entries, not cutscenes, to advance the plot. Through such messages, we slowly begin to understand why not a living soul remains aboard a Martian settlement (the setting is 18 years from now)—and why some rise and attack as zombie-like abominations. As a pleasant surprise, we also get some great satire, especially via "Martian Mayhem," billed as "the worst video game ever made." Thank goodness this claim comes irony-free.

Final Score ●●●●●

Chris Baker

Players: 3
Memory Card: 1 block

That was then...

THIS IS NOW!!

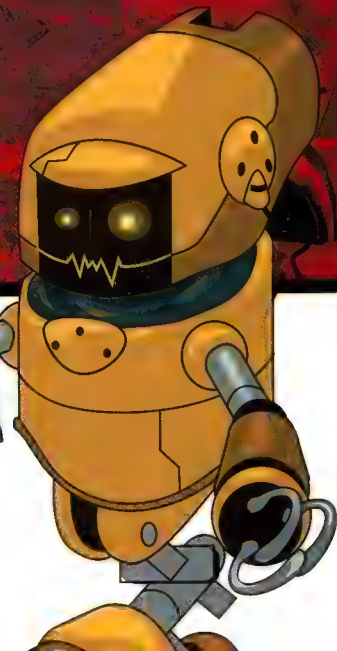
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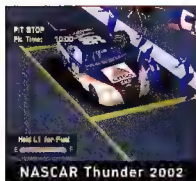
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multi-console
coverage

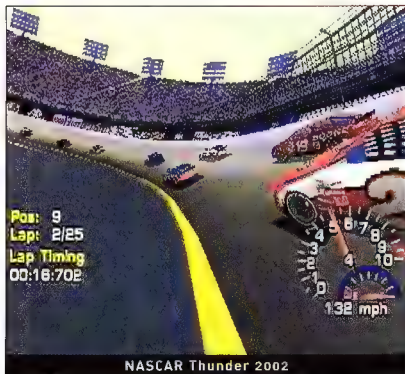


**NASCAR Thunder 2002**

Publisher EA Sports
Developer Black Box
Web Site www.easports.com

I take the white flag at Bristol. Rusty Wallace is breathing down my neck and my engine's starting to overheat. I'm praying she holds together for one more lap. Coming out of turn four the big V8 makes a sickening sound, and dies. Rusty and Jeff Burton streak by and Rusty grabs the checkered flag while I lurch home in third place.

If only every race in *NASCAR Thunder 2002* were nearly as exciting as this. Generally, however, you'll either lose the field entirely thanks to the somewhat skatey control of your car, or you'll dial it in and leave the pack behind, which leads to lap after boring lap of nothing but asphalt and blue sky



ahead of you. Maybe I'm just spoiled by the great PS2 version of *Thunder*, but I remember *NASCAR* games being more exciting than this on the PS one.

To *Thunder*'s credit, though, the challenges introduced by the new *NASCAR* Cards (similar to the Madden Cards) add a bit of variety to the game. But they won't do much for you if you can't get past the choppy framerate.

The sad part is that this is all PS one-owning *NASCAR* fans have to choose from this year. My suggestion? Save your money for a PS2 and a copy of *Thunder* for that system. It's worth it.

Final Score ●●

Greg Stewart

E Players: 1-2
Memory Card: 2 blocks

Pipe Dreams 3D

Publisher Empire Interactive
Developer Sick Puppies Studios
Web Site www.pipedreams3d.com

In a throwback to the early days of the PlayStation, Empire has taken a dated game, given it a polygonal facelift, and then, in a fit of marketing genius, slapped "3D" onto the title. But play it for just a few minutes and you'll quickly see there's no need for *Pipe Dreams* to be in 3D—it's still essentially a tile-based 2D puzzler, but now you get to view the screen from a slightly isometric angle. Um...whoopie?

But that's neither here nor there, as this modest update to the 12-year-old original is a **solid enough game—especially at the cheapo \$9.99 price.**

The premise, like in any decent puzzler, is simple: Connect different pipe pieces to create a continuous flow for the "Green Flooze" to eventually reach the drain. The game throws in some variety via a range of obstacles and objectives. My favorite, for example, is the level in which you play a game of tic-tac-toe by running your piping over the playing pieces and then responding to your foe's counter-moves; only after you win does the drain appear, and then you still have to snake your way over there.

Yet with no two player mode or endless challenges, *Pipe Dreams 3D* is a **limited experience.** It's amusing for a few hours, but it won't ever burrow deep into your psyche like the best puzzlers do.

Final Score ●●●

Gary Steinman

E Players: 1
Memory Card: 1 block



Syphon Filter 3

Solid, but not in a Metal Gear way

Publisher Sony CEA

Developer Sony CEA

Web Site www.playstation.com

I don't have much stomach for war games lately. I feel bad about that, it's not like *Syphon Filter 3* (as just one example) is making a conscious effort to capitalize on recent, tragic events. And it's not like I think there's anything wrong with acting out things in video games that might be morally reprehensible in real life.

But there's something sort of sad, and sort of creepy, about carrying out missions in the ruined streets of Kabul, Afghanistan. Yes, these missions were built long, long before Sept. 11; and yes, the city has been enough of a hotbed of conflict over the years to justify it being put into a semi-realistic war game. But it's an unfortunate coincidence, and it makes me feel sort of conflicted about even playing the game.

I have a similar feeling about



the quality of the gameplay experience itself. On the one hand, you've got a reasonably entertaining and challenging game that does a pretty fair job of balancing action and espionage. On the other hand, you've got some fairly average graphics, some pretty nasty control issues, and a general sense of "same-old, same-old" throughout.

First, the positives. Some areas of SF3 are an utter blast to play. One example: In Afghanistan, while playing as Lian Xing, you find a rifle that can shoot through walls (think of the rail gun in *Red Faction*), which adds a great facet to the stealth side of the game. From the very first mission, the tone is set for variety and action: First, Gabe must quickly snipe a series of targets from a hotel-room window. Once this is complete he must race through the hotel to rescue a hostage, plugging baddies along the way.

The variety of playable characters, settings and weapons throughout the game help keep things from getting too monotonous, which is definitely a good thing. And though the almost universally overdark graphics can strain the eyes, for a PS one game it doesn't look too terrible (but boy is it hard to look at this game once you've played a little *MG52*).

There are, it must be noted, loads of graphical glitches—scenery popping in and out, textures warping and the like—and the sight distance is pretty awful (was there really a time when this sort of thing was the norm?), but overall the game does look fairly solid. There are some nice lighting



effects here and there, some fairly realistic-looking environments, and overall some pretty solid level design.

The structure of the game is also very sound. While portions of certain levels may seem insanely difficult, there are fre-



quent checkpoints (your progress is usually saved after completing each of the assortment of mission objectives) and you can even save and quit in the middle of a mission if you've had enough for the day. And while there are areas that proved somewhat frustrating for me, I never got the sense that the game was too hard. Nor does it seem too simple, and the result is that it's pretty easy to stay interested.

Still, there's nothing about the game that really compelled me to keep playing. Even the minigames—interesting though they might be—didn't give me much motivation to complete them all. Perhaps b-gger fans of the series would be more interested in this back-story structure, but I honestly didn't care about the characters or how they got where they are today. So I'd say it's a solid game, just not an exceptional one.

Final Score ●●●●
Joe Rybicki



Saltwater Sportfishing

Publisher Agetec
Developer SNK

Web Site www.agetec.com

I've run 18-mile marathons that took less out of me than this game. But even though I'm out of breath as I write this, I found a simple pleasure in trying to reel in the kind of fish that could feed entire islands. At first, I suffered through the nightmares of broken lines and the boredom of trying to get a Marlin to bite on a dead crab, but once I wised up, the cussing turned to cheering and I felt like the king of the fishing world.

There are plenty of options, ranging from the **rather deep Tournament mode** where you'll be asked to reel in an assortment of fish of different varieties and weights to the five-minute Arcade mode where you'll try to hook as many as you can in a short time.

The graphics **weren't** turn you away, but they're nothing special, either. Really, it's just a pair of man-hands wrapping a rod. What's there to see? Though the laughably Alan-esque navigating screen will surely have you in stitches, I'm just being mean, considering that's the slightest part of the game.

I would guess renting this, but what kind of cheapskate are you? Fork out the \$10 if you're going to miss your next fishing trip because "the wife" has a baby shower to go to. Or reread *The Old Man and the Sea*. It'll have a similar effect.

Final Score ●●●●
Todd Zuniga

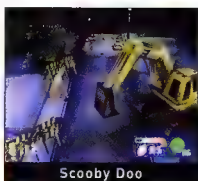


Scoby-Doo and the Cyber Chase

Publisher THQ
Developer Art, Inc.

Web Site www.thq.com
Like, wow! Shaggy's in a bobsled. And this level really stinks. Zoinks! But if you think that's bad, wait until Shaggy hops on a skateboard. Jinkies! Talk about **stodgy control and poor level design!** And how about those ugly, ugly dinosaurs that Scoby has to deal with in the Prehistoric Jungle? Ruh-roh! With its godawful control and gimpy gameplay, this game just doesn't live up to the Scoby license. Whatever that means. Yikes!

Final Score ●●
Gary Steinman



Spec Ops: Covert Assault

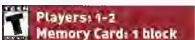
Publisher Take 2
Developer Zombie

Web Site www.take2games.com
Shockingly, the people at Take 2 tell us that the two games in the Spec Ops series have now sold over a million copies. A million! For a series where our scores for it average out at one out of five, that's damned impressive. What a difference a price tag of \$9.99 makes, eh? **Lots of you, it seems, will buy any old crap.**

Equally shocking is the fact that Covert Assault, the third game in this "blockbuster" series, is a big improvement over the previous two. The emphasis of the gameplay seems to have changed: They dropped a lot of the anal-retentive military shenanigans in favor of a more action game-style approach. You run in, you shoot stuff, you move on. It's a teeny bit more Syphon Filter-like in a lot of ways. Kind of. Oh, who am I kidding? It's not any better at all. I was lying.

Most of the annoying "trade-mark" qualities of the series remain. There's still a desperate, desperate line-of-sight problem. You can point your gun squarely at a bad guy and miss hopelessly. There's also the strangely amusing ability of the bad guys to be able to shoot you through bits of scenery. It's full of little problems...but seemingly you all don't care. Go buy it if you must. Don't say I didn't warn you, though.

Final Score ●
John Davison



Twisted Metal: Small Brawl

Publisher Sony
Developer Incog Inc.

Web Site www.playstation.com
After the incredibly awesome Twisted Metal: Black, I was so looking forward to this miniaturized version of Twisted Metal. After all, the mixture of Twisted Metal and RC-car gameplay sounded like the perfect combination. I couldn't have been more wrong. Not only did Incog shrink the characters, but they also shrank the environments, weaponry and intensity...and at the same time, the fun!

Small Brawl isn't a bad game by any means, but it **feels like a definite step in the wrong direction**. Whereas previous TM games had expansive levels where enemies with smart AI would hunt you down, Small Brawl has limited environments and not much in the way of enemy intelligence. I'll admit that the interactivity of such levels as the kitchen was cool, but overall, most left me wishing I was back on the much better-looking skyscrapers and freeways of the previous games. The RC-inspired controls also seem a little floaty and the weapons aren't nearly as fun as those in the previous titles.

But despite the problems I had with the game, I realize that for the demographic Sony is aiming for (kids who've never played the TM games), Small Brawl isn't too bad. I just wish that age wasn't an excuse for lessened gameplay.

Final Score ●●●●
Sam Kennedy



PS2 Review Archive (cont.)

Publisher				Publisher				Publisher				Publisher			
Game	Score	Issue	Game	Score	Issue	Game	Score	Issue	Game	Score	Issue	Game	Score	Issue	
Crossroad Crisis	AgeTec	●●	50	Final Fantasy Chronicles	Sony CEA	●●●●	47	Jet Moto 3	989 Studios	●●●●	26	Mobil 1 Rally Championship	Electronic Arts	●●●	32
Crusaders of Might & Magic	3DO	●●●●	30	Final Fantasy Tactics	Sony CEA	●●●●	1	Jimmy Johnson VR Football	Interplay	●●●●	21	Monaco Grand Prix	Ubi Soft	●●●●	21
Cyber Rider	Sony CEA	●●●●	26	Final Fantasy VIII	Sony CEA	●●●●	1	Jojo's Bizarre Adventure	Capcom	●●●●	31	Monkey Hero	Take 2	●●●	18
Cyber Tiger	EA Sports	●●●●	42	Final Fantasy X	Square EA	●●●●	25	Juggernaut	Jaleco	●●●●	26	Monkey Magic	Sunsoft	●	29
Dance Dance Revolution	Konami	●●●●	42	Final Fantasy X-2	Square EA	●●●●	39	K-1 Grand Prix	Jaleco	●●●●	28	Monkey King	Hasbro Int.	●●	5
Dance Dance Revolution	Konami	●●●●	49	Fisherman's Bait	Konami	●●●●	18	K-1 Revenge	Jaleco	●●●●	18	Monster Rancher 2	Tecmo	●●●●	26
Danger Girl	THQ	●●●●	39	Fisherman's Bait 2: Big Ol' Bass	Konami	●●●●	27	Kage: Decapitation II	Tecmo	●●●●	14	Monster Rancher Battle Card	Tecmo	●●●●	36
Danger Zone	THQ	●●●●	39	Filteknies Bedrock Bowling	SouthPeak	●●●●	37	Karla	Atlas	●●●●	17	Episode II	Tecmo	●●●●	41
Dark Omen	Electronic Arts	●●●●	9	Forced 199	Empire	●●●●	44	Kensel Sacred Fire	Konami	●●●●	27	Monster Rancher Hop-A-Bout	Tecmo	●●●●	41
DarkStallions	Capcom	●●●●	16	Formula 1 98	Psygnosis	●●●●	15	Killer Loop	Crave	●●●●	27	Monster Seed	Sunsoft	●●●●	20
Darkstone	Take 2 Int.	●●●●	43	Formula 1 99	Psygnosis	●●●●	28	King of Fighters '99	AgeTec	●●●●	41	Monsters, Inc.	Sony CEA	●●●●	51
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX	Acclaim Max	●●●●	38	Forsaken	Acclaim	●●●●	10	KISS Pinball	Take 2	●●●●	46	Mort the Chicken	Crave	●●●●	41
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX: Maximum Remix	Acclaim Max	●●●●	47	Fox Sports Golf '99	Fox Interactive	●●●●	11	Klonoa	Namco	●●●●	16	Mortal Kombat: Special Forces	Midway	●●●●	36
Dead in the Water	ASC	●●●●	17	Fox Sports Soccer '99	Fox Interactive	●●●●	11	Knockout Kings	EA Sports	●●●●	16	Mortal Kombat 4	Midway	●●●●	11
Dead or Alive	Tecmo	●●●●	8	Freestyle Boardin' '99	Capcom	●●●●	18	Knockout Kings	EA Sports	●●●●	39	Moto Racer	Electronic Arts	●●●●	3
Deathtrap Dungeon	Eidos	●●●●	9	Freestyle Motocross	Acclaim	●●●●	40	Knockout Kings 2000	Konami	●●●●	27	Moto Racer 2	Electronic Arts	●●●●	14
Deception III: Dark Delusion	Tecmo	●●●●	31	McGrath vs. Pastrana	Hasbro Int.	●●●●	4	Konami Arcade Classics	Infogrames	●●●●	23	Moto Racer World Tour	Infogrames	●●●●	40
Demolition Racer	Infogrames	●●●●	26	Frogger 2: Swampy's Revenge	Hasbro Int.	●●●●	38	Koudelia	Infogrames	●●●●	35	Motocross Mania	Take 2 Int.	●●●●	48
Destiny	Kod	●●●●	16	Front Mission 3	Square EA	●●●●	31	Kraft Warner's Arena	Midway	●●●●	34	Motorhead	Fox Interactive	●●●●	14
Devil May Cry	Midway	●●●●	39	Future Cop L.A.P.D.	Electronic Arts	●●●●	13	Kraft Unleashed	Sony CEA	●●●●	34	Mr. Domino	Acclaim	●●●●	15
Diablo	Electronic Arts	●●●●	8	G-Police	Psygnosis	●●●●	3	The Land Before Time: Great Valley Racing Adv.	TDK Mediactive	●●●●	46	Mr. Driller	Namco	●●●●	33
Die Hard Trilogy: Viva Las Vegas	Fox Interactive	●●●●	31	G-Darius	THQ	●●●●	13	The Land Before Time: The Land Before Time	Source Source	●●●●	39	Mr. Psycho Maze Madness	Codemasters	●●●●	28
Digimon Digital Card Battle	Bandai	●●●●	48	Galaga: Destination Earth	Hasbro Int.	●●●●	39	Return to the Great Valley	EA Sports	●●●●	25	MTV Sports: Pure Ride	THQ	●●●●	39
Digimon World	Bandai	●●●●	36	Galerians	Tecmo	●●●●	39	Return to the Great Valley: Lost Remedy	EA Sports	●●●●	25	MTV Sports:	THQ	●●●●	39
Digimon World 2	Bandai	●●●●	46	Gallup Racer	Crave	●●●●	28	The Legend of Dragoon	Sony CEA	●●●●	39	T.J. Lavin's Ultimate BMX	THQ	●●●●	45
Dino Crisis	Capcom	●●●●	38	Garfield Legends	Midway	●●●●	25	Legend of Legaia	Square EA	●●●●	15	TMG Sports: Skateboarding	THQ	●●●●	39
Dino Crisis 2	Capcom	●●●●	38	Goldie	Midway	●●●●	34	Legend of Mana	EA Sports	●●●●	39	TMG Sports: Skateboarding	THQ	●●●●	39
Disney's Dinosaur	Ubi Soft	●●●●	36	Golem	EA Sports	●●●●	30	Lego Island 2:	Lego Media	●●●●	46	TMG Sports: Skateboarding	THQ	●●●●	39
Donald Duck: Goin' Quackers	Ubi Soft	●●●●	39	Golem 2: Deep Cover Gecko	Eidos	●●●●	20	The Brickster's Revenge	Lego Media	●●●●	37	Muppet Monster Adventure	Midway	●●●●	39
Doomhill Mountain Bike Racing	Activision	●●●●	27	Golem 3: Enter the Gecko	Midway	●●●●	7	Lego Rock Raiders	Lego Media	●●●●	37	Muppet Race Mania	Midway	●●●●	39
Dracula: The Resurrection	Dragon	●●●●	46	Golem 4: The King	THQ	●●●●	7	The Lion King	Paradox	●●●●	42	Muppet Race Mania	Fox Interactive	●●●●	11
Dragon Tales: Dragon Seek	NewKidCo	●●●●	45	Golem 5: The Lion King	Hasbro Int.	●●●●	28	Simba's Mighty Adventure	THQ	●●●●	39	Nagano Winter Olympics '98	Konami	●●●●	6
Dragon Valor	Namco	●●●●	38	Golem 6: The Road to El Dorado	Revolution	●●●●	42	The Little Mermaid II	Natsume	●●●●	49	NASCAR 99	EA Sports	●●●●	3
Dragon Warrior VII	Enix	●●●●	51	Golem 7: The Road to El Dorado	Sony CEA	●●●●	9	Lode Runner	Infogrames	●●●●	39	NASCAR 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	26
Dragonball GT	Bandai	●●●●	4	Golem 8: The Road to El Dorado	Sony CEA	●●●●	29	Looney Tunes: Sheep Raider	Infogrames	●●●●	51	NASCAR 2001	EA Sports	●●●●	38
Dragonslayers	Jaleco	●●●●	15	Golem 9: The Road to El Dorado	Take 2	●●●●	10	Looney Tunes: Sheep Raider	Electronic Arts	●●●●	22	NASCAR Heat	Hasbro Int.	●●●●	40
Driver	EA Interactive	●●●●	24	Grand Theft Auto 2	Rockstar	●●●●	27	Looney Tunes: Sheep Raider	Working Designs	●●●●	2	NASCAR Rumble	Electronic Arts	●●●●	31
Driver 2	Infogrames	●●●●	40	Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Rockstar	●●●●	22	Looney Tunes: Sheep Raider	Working Designs	●●●●	2	NBA Fastbreak '98	Midway	●●●●	43
Duke Nukem: Land of the Babes	Infogrames	●●●●	40	Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Activision	●●●●	1	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	EA Sports	●●●●	2	NBA Hoops	Konami	●●●●	7
Duke Nukem: Time of the Beast	EA Interactive	●●●●	14	Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Sony CEA	●●●●	26	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	EA Sports	●●●●	23	NBA In the Zone '98	Konami	●●●●	28
Duke Nukem: Total Madness	SouthPeak	●●●●	29	Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Sony CEA	●●●●	34	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	EA Sports	●●●●	23	NBA In the Zone 2000	Konami	●●●●	19
Dukes of Hazzard II	SouthPeak	●●●●	41	Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Sony CEA	●●●●	34	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	EA Sports	●●●●	23	NBA Live '98	EA Sports	●●●●	3
Dasy Dukes II Out	SouthPeak	●●●●	41	Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Sony CEA	●●●●	34	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	EA Sports	●●●●	23	NBA Live 99	EA Sports	●●●●	16
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX	Electronic Arts	●●●●	27	Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Sony CEA	●●●●	34	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	EA Sports	●●●●	23	NBA Live 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	28
EA Sports Supercross	Infogrames	●●●●	32	Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Sony CEA	●●●●	34	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	EA Sports	●●●●	23	NBA Live 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	28
Ecot Night	AgeTec	●●●●	23	Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Sony CEA	●●●●	34	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	EA Sports	●●●●	23	NBA Live 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	28
ECW Hardcore Revolution	Acclaim	●●●●	38	Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Sony CEA	●●●●	34	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	EA Sports	●●●●	23	NBA Live 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	28
ECW Hardcore Revolution	Acclaim	●●●●	38	Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Sony CEA	●●●●	34	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	EA Sports	●●●●	23	NBA Live 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	28
Elinor	Square EA	●●●●	21	Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Sony CEA	●●●●	34	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	EA Sports	●●●●	23	NBA Live 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	28
Elemental Gearbolt	Working Designs	●●●●	11	Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Sony CEA	●●●●	34	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	EA Sports	●●●●	23	NBA Live 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	28
Eliminator	Psygnosis	●●●●	40	Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Sony CEA	●●●●	34	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	EA Sports	●●●●	23	NBA Live 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	28
The Emperor's New Groove	SEGA	●●●●	40	Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Sony CEA	●●●●	34	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	EA Sports	●●●●	23	NBA Live 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	28
ESPN MLS GameNight	Konami	●●●●	40	Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Sony CEA	●●●●	34	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	EA Sports	●●●●	23	NBA Live 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	28
Evil Eyes	Sunsoft	●●●●	38	Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Sony CEA	●●●●	34	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	EA Sports	●●●●	23	NBA Live 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	28
Evil Road: Hall to the King	THQ	●●●●	41	Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Sony CEA	●●●●	34	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	EA Sports	●●●●	23	NBA Live 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	28
Evil Zone	THQ	●●●●	41	Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Sony CEA	●●●●	34	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	EA Sports	●●●●	23	NBA Live 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	28
Expendable	Infogrames	●●●●	34	Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Sony CEA	●●●●	34	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	EA Sports	●●●●	23	NBA Live 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	28
F1 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	33	Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Sony CEA	●●●●	34	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	EA Sports	●●●●	23	NBA Live 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	28
F1 Championship Season	EA Sports	●●●●	40	Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Sony CEA	●●●●	34	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	EA Sports	●●●●	23	NBA Live 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	28
F1 Racing Championship	Ubi Soft	●●●●	39	Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Sony CEA	●●●●	34	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	EA Sports	●●●●	23	NBA Live 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	28
Family Feud	Hasbro Int.	●●●●	30	Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Sony CEA	●●●●	34	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	EA Sports	●●●●	23	NBA Live 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	28
Fantastic Four	Acclaim	●●●●	30	Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Sony CEA	●●●●	34	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	EA Sports	●●●●	23	NBA Live 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	28
Fatal Fury: Wild Ambition	SNK	●●●●	30	Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Sony CEA	●●●●	34	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	EA Sports	●●●●	23	NBA Live 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	28
Fear Effect	Eidos	●●●●	43	Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Sony CEA	●●●●	34	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	EA Sports	●●●●	23	NBA Live 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	28
Fear Effect 2: Retro Hell	Eidos	●●●●	43	Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Sony CEA	●●●●	34	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	EA Sports	●●●●	23	NBA Live 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	28
Felony 1979	Asci	●●●●	39	Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Sony CEA	●●●●	34	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	EA Sports	●●●●	23	NBA Live 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	28
FIFA 98	EA Sports	●●●●	4	Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Sony CEA	●●●●	34	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	EA Sports	●●●●	23	NBA Live 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	28
FIFA 99	EA Sports	●●●●	4	Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Sony CEA	●●●●	34	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	EA Sports	●●●●	23	NBA Live 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	28
FIFA 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	27	Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Sony CEA	●●●●	34	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	EA Sports	●●●●	23	NBA Live 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	28
FIFA 2001 Major League Soccer EA Sports	EA Sports	●●●●	39	Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Sony CEA	●●●●	34	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	EA Sports	●●●●	23	NBA Live 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	28
The Fifth Element	Activision	●●●●	31	Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Sony CEA	●●●●	34	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	EA Sports	●●●●	23	NBA Live 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	28
Fighter Maker	Acclaim	●●●●	21	Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Sony CEA	●●●●	34	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	EA Sports	●●●●	23	NBA Live 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	28
Fist of the North Star	Eidos	●●●●	39	Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Sony CEA	●●●●	34	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	EA Sports	●●●●	23	NBA Live 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	28
Fighting Force 2	Eidos	●●●●	29	Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Sony CEA	●●●●	34	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	EA Sports	●●●●	23	NBA Live 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	28
Final Fantasy Anthology	Square EA	●●●●	26	Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Sony CEA	●●●●	34	Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	EA Sports	●●●●	23	NBA Live 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	28

PSone Review Archive (cont.)

Game names in green indicate a Greatest Hits title. Ratings in red indicate a five-disc score.															
Game	Publisher	Score	Issue	Game	Publisher	Score	Issue	Game	Publisher	Score	Issue	Game	Publisher	Score	Issue
NFL GameDay 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	25	Re-Volt	Acclaim	●●	26	Sports Car GT	Electronic Arts	●●●●	21	Toy Story Racer	Activision	●●●●	44
NFL GameDay 2001	EA Sports	●●●●	37	Ready 2 Rumble	Midway	●●●●	27	Spyce: Year of the Dragon	Sony CEA	●●●●●	39	Transformers: Beast Wars Transmetal	Bam! Interactive	●●●●	36
NFL GameDay 2002	EA Sports	●●●●	49	Ready 2 Rumble Boxing Round 2	Midway	●●●●	40	Spyce 2: Ripto's Rage!	Sony CEA	●●●●●	39	Yan Gomer	Albion	●●●●	13
NFL Xtreme	989 Studios	●●●●	11	Red Asphalt	Interplay	●●	3	Spyce the Dragon	Sony CEA	●●●●	13	Treasures of the Deep	Namco	●●●●	1
NFL Xtreme 2	989 Studios	●●●●	24	Real Fishing	Natsume	●●●●	3	Star Ocean: The 2nd Story	Sony CEA	●●●●	27	Trick'n Snowboarder	Capcom	●●	25
NASC Racing	Infogrames	●●●●	35	Real Fishing II	Natsume	●●●●	34	Star Trek: Invasion	Activision	●●●●	37	Triple Play 99	EA Sports	●●	9
NHL 99	EA Sports	●●●●	25	Resident Evil 2	Capcom	●●●●●	6	Star Wars: Episode I—Jedi Power Battles	LucasArts	●●●●	33	Triple Play 2000	EA Sports	●●●●●	20
NHL 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	38	Resident Evil 2 Dual Shock	Capcom	●●●●●	27	Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace	LucasArts	●●●●	25	Triple Play 2001	EA Sports	●●●●●	32
NHL Blades of Steel 2000	Konami	●●	28	Resident Evil: Director's Cut	Capcom	●●●●	2	Star Wars: Masters of Terror	Killicorn	●●●●	4	Triple Play Baseball	EA Sports	●●●●	44
NHL Breakaway 98	Acclaim	●●●●	2	Resident Evil Survivor	Capcom	●●●●	38	Star Wars Demolition	LucasArts	●●●●	4	Turbo Prop Racing	Sony CEA	●●●●	11
NHL Championship 99	Fox Interactive	●●●●	27	Rhapsody: A Musical Adventure	Atlus	●●●●	25	Street Racer	Sony CEA	●●●●	2	Twisted Metal III	989 Studios	●●●●	16
NHL Faceoff 98	Sony CEA	●●●●●	2	Rising Zan	Agebco	●●●●	24	Street Racer 2	Sony CEA	●●●●	2	Twisted Metal 4	989 Studios	●●●●	28
NHL Faceoff 99	989 Studios	●●●●	14	Risk	Hasbro Int.	●●●●	21	Street Fighter Alpha 3	GT Interactive	●●●●●	15	Tyco RC: Assault With a Battery/Mattel Int.	●●●●	38	
NHL Faceoff 2000	989 Studios	●●●●	26	Rival Schools	Capcom	●●●●	14	Street Fighter Collection	Capcom	●●●●●	21	Ultimate 8-Ball	THQ	●●●●	22
NHL Faceoff 2001	Sony CEA	●●●●	38	Riven: The Sequel to Myst	Acclaim	●●●●●	6	Street Fighter Collection 2	Capcom	●●●●	4	Ultimate Fighting Championship	THQ	●●●●	40
NHL Rock the Risk	Electronic Arts	●●●●	32	Road Race: Jail Break	Electronic Arts	●●●●	41	Street Fighter EX Plus Alpha	Capcom	●●●●	2	Um Jammer Lammy	Sony CEA	●●●●	24
Nick Toons Racing	Infogrames	●●●●	48	Rock Road: Jail Break	Electronic Arts	●●●●	30	Street Fighter EX2 Plus	Capcom	●●●●	2	The Unholy War	Eidos	●●●●	14
Nightmare Creatures	Activision	●●●●	3	Rock 'Em Sock 'Em Robots	Mattel Int.	●●●●	11	Street Fighter EX2 Plus	Capcom	●●●●	33	Uprising X	3DO	●●●●	17
Nightmare Creatures II	Konami	●●	33	Rocket Power	THQ	●●	51	Street Skater	Electronic Arts	●●●●	19	Urban Chaos	Eidos	●●●●	33
Ninja: Shadow of Darkness	THQ	●●	15	Team Rocket Rescue	THQ	●●	51	Street Skier 2	Electronic Arts	●●●●	32	Vagrant Story	Square EA	●●●●	33
Nuclear Strike	Electronic Arts	●●●●●	3	Rogue Rip	GT Interactive	●●●●	14	Strider 2	Capcom	●●●●	34	Valkyrie Profile	Enix	●●●●	36
O.D.T.	Pygnosis	●●	15	Roll Away	Pygnosis	●●●●	13	Striker Pro 2000	Infogrames	●●●●	37	Vampire Hunter D	Jaleco	●●●●	37
Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus	GT Interactive	●●●●	15	Rolling	Pygnosis	●●●●	19	Strikers 1945	Agebco	●●●●	44	Vandal Hearts II	Konami	●●●●	21
Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus	GT Interactive	●●●●	15	Rolling Stage II	Pygnosis	●●●●	31	Suikoden II	Konami	●●●●	26	Vanguard Bandits	THQ	●●●●	33
One	ASC	●●●●	4	Romance of the 3 Kingdoms VI	Koei	●●●●	30	Superhero 2000	EA Sports	●●	32	Vanguard Bandits II	Working Designs	●●●●	37
One Piece Mansion	Capcom	●●	50	Romance of the 3 Kingdoms VII	Koei	●●●●	30	Superhero 2000	EA Sports	●●	32	Vanguard Bandits II	Working Designs	●●●●	37
Pac-Man World	Namco	●●●●	25	Romance of the 3 Kingdoms VIII	Koei	●●●●	30	Superhero 2000	EA Sports	●●	32	Vanguard Bandits II	Working Designs	●●●●	37
Pandemonium 2	Midway	●●●●	3	Romance of the 3 Kingdoms IX	Koei	●●●●	30	Superhero 2000	EA Sports	●●	32	Vanguard Bandits II	Working Designs	●●●●	37
Panzer Front	Agatec	●●●●	51	Romance of the 3 Kingdoms X	Koei	●●●●	30	Superhero 2000	EA Sports	●●	32	Vanguard Bandits II	Working Designs	●●●●	37
Parappa the Rapper	Sony CEA	●●●●●	2	Rugrats: Totally Angelica	THQ	●●●●	48	Superhero 2000	EA Sports	●●	32	Vanguard Bandits II	Working Designs	●●●●	37
Parappa the Rapper 2	Sony CEA	●●●●●	2	Rugrats in Paris: The Movie	THQ	●●●●	41	Superhero 2000	EA Sports	●●	32	Vanguard Bandits II	Working Designs	●●●●	37
Parasite Eve II	Square EA	●●●●	12	Runabout 2	NotB	●●	36	Sydney 2000	Eidos	●●●●	38	Vanguard Bandits II	Working Designs	●●●●	37
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Parasite Eve															

WELCOME TO THE SWEEPSTAKES ZONE!



GRAND PRIZE: ONE TRIP TO AIR COMBAT SCHOOL IN SAN DIEGO FOR ONE FULL DAY OF REAL AIRPLANE DOG FIGHTING. The Fighter Lead in Program includes 2 flights of approximately one hour each. It is scheduled with a flight in the morning after a one hour brief on tactics and maneuvers and a flight debriefing afterwards. The guest pilot will return to the briefing room in the afternoon to prepare for the second mission. At the end of the day, the guest pilot is awarded a leather flight jacket and nametag with wings and his/her call sign on it. (Trip, training, and accommodations for one night are included.)



(Jacket price may vary from illustration)

THIRD PRIZES



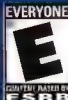
FOURTH PRIZES



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PlayStation 2



Violence

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Want your name in OPM? Then find the best tricks and send them our way. Tips, cheats and everything in between will do. Also, if you're stuck, send us a question and we'll dig up an answer and put it in our new Tricks Forum. Send e-mail to: OPM@ziffdavis.com. Make the subject line of the e-mail read "Top Secrets." If it isn't titled "Top Secrets" we won't find it.

Grand Theft Auto III

You're begging for 'em, we've got 'em. A handful of cheats to use for Grand Theft Auto III. Keep in mind, rumor has it that using a cheat will ruin the ending of the game. So make sure you have an alternate game file for cheating.

Lowens your Wanted Level:

R2, R2, L1, R2, Up, Down, Up, Down, Up, Down

Raises your Wanted Level

R2, R2, L1, R2, Left, Right, Left, Right, Left, Right

Makes the sky bright, blue and clear

L1, L2, R1, R2, R2, R1, L2, Triangle

Makes the fog roll in

L1, L2, R1, R2, R2, R1, L2, X

Makes for serious cloud cover

L1, L2, R1, R2, R2, R1, L2, Square

Put this in for a rainy day

L1, L2, R1, R2, R2, R1, L2, Circle

Makes a tank fall from the sky (yes, a freakin' tank!)

Circle, Circle, Circle, Circle, Circle, Circle, R1, L2,

L1, Triangle, Circle, Triangle

Makes time progress more quickly

Circle, Circle, Circle, Square, Square, Square,

Square, Square, L1, Triangle, Circle, Triangle

For brawling pedestrians

Down, Up, Left, Up, X, R1, R2, L2, L1

Raging pedestrians who hate you

Down, Up, Left, Up, X, R1, R2, L2, L1

Schizophrenic pedestrians

R2, R1, Triangle, X, L2, L1, Up, Down

The locals box each other

Right, R2, Circle, R1, L2, Down, L1, R1

Tip-top car handling

R1, L1, R2, L1, Left, R1, R1, Triangle

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3



This is it: all the Secret Tapes and how to score them. Aside from this jibber-jabber, our best advice is to beat every task in every level. That's when the unlockables start rolling in and they are amazing.



AREA 51

There are three competitions spread around THPS3 like grape jelly on toast. At first, high scores might seem impossible, but with enough variety, along with the Revert and Manuals, you'll be scoring 99.9 on every level in no time. One good idea is to end your run if you've linked together a high-scoring series of fresh tricks. It beats crashing and burning.

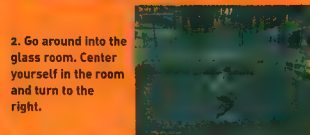
PATIENCE

Trying to finish a level off in one two-minute run is the best way to accomplish no goals within that time. Much like the bigger levels from the first two games, it's best to pick a goal and go after it, rather than spelling 5-K-A-T-E or beating up on the Sick Score. Of course, much like in the first two games, the first level is an exception. Try netting all nine at once and you'll feel like a king. It's doable.

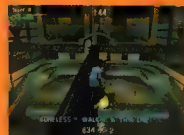
The Foundry's Secret Tape



1. Veer to the right once the level starts and use that little ramp to get onto the scaffolding.



2. Go around into the glass room. Center yourself in the room and turn to the right.

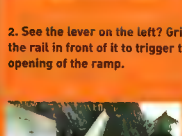


3. Use the ramp to elevate you onto the vents and then grind into the Secret Tape.

Canada's Secret Tape



1. Spin around and use the Blade to get to the forest area, land on the bridge, and keep going along the bridge (either the right or the left).



2. See the lever on the left? Grind the rail in front of it to trigger the opening of the ramp.



3. Use the ramp in front of you to get onto the newly opened ramp on the upper left. Then use that ramp to propel you to the next level.

4. Slow down, let go of X, and hold Triangle and angle yourself to the right. Balance and you'll be ushered right into the Secret Tape.

LIP BALANCE

You'll find stat coins scattered around different levels the way you find pennies curiously surface in your bedroom. The question is: What stat category should you spend them on?

First chance you get, take all the points off Lip Balance. It may look cool to do, but point-wise, it's useless and won't make you a better skater. My advice is

to stat up on Air and Hangtime and Speed. Those will help you get to hard-to-reach places in a hurry, but then again, I'm a vert guy. If you're better at street skating, stock up on Rail Balance and Manual Balance. But remember that Speed is key. It'll help you hurry around levels when time is short.



THE BONELESS

The Boneless is infinitely useful. To execute it you push Up, Up while holding X, then let go of X. It's basically an extension of an ollie. You can use it to 1-1 multiply your score and 2.) help get you a tad more air.

A little trick is to push Up all the time. Always, when you're on the ground, push Up. Up, Up, Up. So it's cocked and ready.

The Airport's Secret Tape

1. Go down all of the elevators until you get to the terminal, then turn right and look to your left for the ramp with the "C" on it.



2. Ride up the ramp, then hold down Triangle after you've passed the first red bar. You'll stick to the second red bar if you time it right.



3. Grind around until you run into the Secret Tape.

Suburbia's Secret Tape

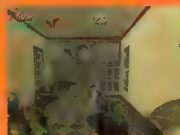


1. After helping the Thin Man, bounce into the house and clear the first wall using the ramp. Then take a right and square up with the house.

2. Once you've got enough speed, use the ramps to get you into the house, breaking through the window.



3. Once you're in, center yourself, hold down Triangle, and you'll skate right into the Secret Tape.



Los Angeles' Secret Tape

There are two ways to get to the Secret Tape. Both have their difficulties, but here's the one that'll get you there in a hurry.



1. From the starting point, turn around and get speed up using the ramp behind you. Then grind onto the wire that's to the left of the starting point. Jump and grind over and over to keep your momentum.



2. After riding the wire all the way up, shoot straight ahead and Boneless over the gap. Then Boneless again off the wooden ramp.

3. From the top of the building you'll need to hop the gap to get to the pink platform. Then center yourself with the diving board that will launch you over the city. Get momentum, jump, then grind the pole and it'll lead you into the Secret Tape.



THE REVERT

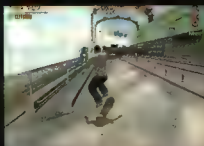
In Tony Hawk 2, the street skaters had all the advantages because of the addition of the Manual system. Now, with the Revert, things have evened out for vert skaters and big scores are there for the making.

Here's how it works: After you land a vert trick, you need to tap R2. It's important to hit the button *right* as your board hits the ramp. At that point your skater will basically "switch" and then you need to push up/down or down/up to go into a Manual or Nose Manual.

You'll have little more than a second to get from the Revert to the Manual. Timing is everything.

After you're in the Manual your skater will be going more slowly, but you should have more than enough locomotion to get up the other side of a halfpipe for a \$40. After that, you can land in the Revert again, Manual, then try to get up one more time. But your best bet is to ollie up to the top of the ramp and start a grind. If you can do that, you can gain multipliers for a huge score. Even when you're first getting used to it, you should be able to net scores in the 100,000-point range.

FLATLANDING



Along with the Revert, the other new moves set are the Flatland tricks. If you've ever seen a Rodney Mullen skate video, you know what we're talking about. There are Caspers and Anti-Caspers and instead of having to ollie between moves (like in the first two THPS games) you can just link them together without the interruption of an ollie. For instance, if you have to push Up, Down, Triangle for a Primo, you can go right into a Casper with, say, Right, Down, Triangle. There's no jumping in between and transition is absolute silk.

UNLOCKABLES

We didn't want to ruin any surprises for you, but if there's one thing that puts THPS3 over the top, it's the legendary unlockables. After you beat the game once, you'll want to keep beating it over and over. Trust us. We know. After mastering the game once, we've been going around the clock just to see which unlockable skaters would make an appearance. It's quite a list. So get to it.



STRATEGY GUIDES

Need a little more help in getting through some of today's hottest games? We're here to tell you if their guides are worth your cash.

Devil May Cry

This is the debut of BradyGames' Signature Series line of strategy guides and it's really promising. Not only does this guide include everything you could possibly want to know about one of the best games of the year—a walk-through, boss strategies, Secret Missions (in a detachable "Secret Missions Pack," no less), unlockables, etc.—but it's also downright beautiful to look at. The guide includes some cool extras, including short interviews with the team behind the game (no Shinji Mikami, unfortunately) and breathtaking concept art, with some pieces spanning the entire two-page spread. It's worth the \$14.99 hit.

Final Score: ●●●●●

www.bradygames.com

**Grand Theft Auto III**

This is the strategy guide to end all strategy guides because there's so much stuff to do in GTA3, it'll take you forever to find it on your own. Personally, we think finding it on your own is better. But with this guide, the

people who don't have the 90 hours to spend will blow through without a problem. It's especially useful when you're wandering around looking for the Hidden Packages that are tucked in different corners of the city. Check this one out.

Final Score: ●●●●●

www.bradygames.com

Spy Hunter

At first glance, the Spy Hunter guide seems a little short on content, as the text is laid out in a manner so as to make for a lot of unused space. However, what's there—maps, lots of screens and helpful words—should provide some adequate help. It also includes a history of Spy Hunter (which actually neglects Super Spy Hunter for Super NES), as well as several cool secrets.

Final Score: ●●●●

www.bradygames.com

Batman: Vengeance

Aside from some character bios, you're not going to find much of anything in the way of extras in this guide. You're also not going to get much in the way of pretty screens, as many appear so dark you wonder why Brady even bothered to include them. [On page 26, we see one with nothing more than a health bar, a building ledge, and Batman's upper right leg—the rest is all black.] Still, the text within should help you pass any trouble spots, so its primary purpose is served well enough.

Final Score: ●●●

www.bradygames.com

grand theft auto III

Grand Theft Auto III could be the game of the year on PlayStation 2. It's that fresh. That's why we're bringing you these tips to get you on your way. We could've told you how to get through different missions, but that'd just spoil the cinematic fun. We'll save that for next month. Use these tips to help you on your way to being a true gangster.

car jacking

a)

Stealing a car from a pedestrian is easy enough business, but if you're in a hurry and need a quicker car, there's a quick and efficient way to steal it. 1. Spot a car that you find to your liking. 2. Cut in front of the car you want to steal, then stop by holding the Triangle. 3. The car will stop and you can pull the unsuspecting innocent from his car and commandeer it.

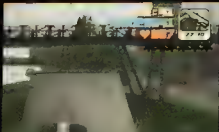
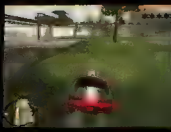
cop car jacking

B)

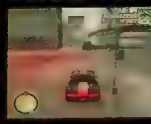
At some point you'll need to acquire a cop car, and it's not easy. If you just pull the cop out, he'll wag a pistol in your face before you can say "shinola." Here's the trick: 1. Cut in front of a cop car to get him to stop. 2. Go to the passenger side door and tug on the handle using Triangle (it'll be locked). 3. When he gets out to chase you, scoot around, hop in, and drive like mad!

Stuntman Plus

Pulling off stunts is just another fantastic extra that makes GTA3 a dream come true to fans of replayability. All over the city you'll find randomly placed ramps. But they're not random at all. In fact, it's a huge clue to get a fast car and get jumping. If you do it right, you'll get points, a cash bonus and a nice boost to your driving ego. Sometimes you'll land it perfectly. But other times you'll start the type of spin reserved only for helicopter blades.



Stunt gone wrong



Don't Be a Cop Killer



Wow, cool! In GTA3 you can kill cops. Well, don't. Not because you're terrorizing those who do the ol' protect-and-serve, but because it will shoot your Wanted Meter into three-star territory. And that means you're in big trouble.

alternatives

Completing missions in GTA3 can be tough, even mind-numbing. You'll want to kill your P52 before you kill the person you're putting a hit on. But remember: A lot of solutions exist for every problem. If you have to hit someone, try backing off and using a sniper rifle from a distance. Or, try running him over in a car. Sometimes, there are a few ways to do it, and the best way won't seem obvious until you've tried the other bad ways.

Sirens



It may be a little thing, but if you're bouncing around in a jacked cop car, tap on R3 to get the sirens to come on. When they're on, cars will pull to the side of the road to get out of your way. Which is always nice.

What You Need

We didn't want to spoil any of the game's tricks and turns, but next month we'll be delivering hints to get through the toughest missions for GTA3. But we'll need your help. Write an e-mail to gpm@ziffdavis.com and put "GTA3 Trick" in the subject line. Tell us the best way to get through a mission, a mission you can't figure out, or any other tips you discover along the way. Capisce?

the sweetest ride



There are times, early in your GTA3 experience, when you'll want a car with a little bit of kick. But there aren't many to choose from. Unless you know the secret spot. Grab a car, any car, and head over to the car dealership around the corner from 8-Ball's hideout. Inside the window

you'll find a Dodge Viper-type of ride that can blow the pants off any car on the streets of Portland. It'll come in particularly handy when you're doing the "Turismo" level. Also note that the car won't always be there, but it does regenerate in a handful of different colors! Nice.



TACTICAL ESPIONAGE ACTION

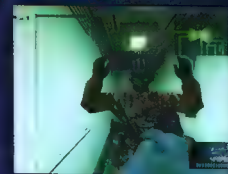
METAL GEAR SOLID 2

SONS OF LIBERTY

MGS2 Introductory Strategies

OK, you've just picked up MGS2 and you're looking for pointers to get you through the game. As usual, we've got you covered. Here is a crowd of basic tips to comfort you through the first 15 hours with the game. Get going with these and then tune in next month when we start showing big-time specifics.

Being "Ration's"



One of the most important strategies to keep in mind as you play through MGS2 is that you can often build up rations and extra ammo by stealing them from soldiers. One way to do this is to hold them up (do this by hitting Square to pull up your pistol and then L1 to lock on and walk in front of them). If you then point your gun toward a guard's head or crotch area, he'll often give up a useful item. Also, once you take out a guard, try dragging him around for a little while—chances are, you'll shake loose an item or two.

The WWF meets MGS2



Another really useful action is the choke-hold. Not only will it help you get through areas without having to use ammo (and possibly alerting other soldiers), but there will be parts where you're required to

perform this function to progress further. As well, if you have one guard in a choke-hold, others will hesitate to fire upon you. To perform the choke-hold, unequip your weapon and come to a complete stop behind an enemy (it's important that you're not pressing the directional pad at all or else you'll perform a hip toss). Then, simply press the action button and you'll grab the enemy in the choke-hold. From there you can either kill the enemy by applying lots of pressure (repeated taps to the action button) or drag the enemy wherever you wish (however, press the action button a few times to apply pressure if he tries to break free).

Wacky Shots

While you can simply shoot enemies from the third-person perspective as in the original game, the new first-person perspective allows you much more accuracy and it's imperative you learn how to aim well. Head shots are the way to go, as you'll be able to disable the enemy in no time and keep from alerting other guards. As well, if you've got master aim, simply shoot the "I" above an enemy's head when he first spots you and he'll fall asleep.

When Itgerts

Learn how to quickly equip and unequip your weapons or items by simply tapping the L2 and R2 buttons. Getting used to doing this will help you keep your calm when the action gets intense.

Just Shoot Me



While you can carefully sneak past security cameras by walking against the wall (they're perched on, it's often easier simply just to shoot the lens and disable it

Sit and Be Fit

If you're bleeding or low on health, crouch down and remain still to slowly regain some energy. Unfortunately, this technique only refills your life meter up to the blue area, but still, it comes in handy!

Athleticism Counts

You can improve your grab ability by doing pull-ups. Hang down over an edge and go into the first-person mode. By pressing down multiple times you'll peek over the edge, effectively performing pull-up motions. Perform 100 of these (you can take breaks when your grab meter gets low) and you'll increase your ability.

Hide and Go Seek

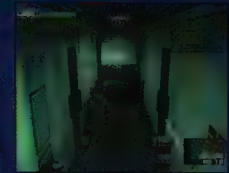
If you happen to get spotted by the enemy and he sets off the alarm, often times running into an adjoining room or being in a locker is an easy way to avoid conflict. The enemies are smart in MGS2, but usually not smart enough to search every corner.

Sometimes it can be easiest just to leave rooms immediately if you're spotted, by the enemy so they won't have enough time to set off the alarm. Return to the room right after and things will be restored to normal.

The Billion Uses of Coolant

Although Peter Stillman gives you coolant spray to freeze bombs, the item has a good many uses. For example, spray it at an enemy and they'll become temporarily blinded. Or, spray it at someone to wake him or her up. It can also serve as bug spray.

Nicotine Fix



Cigarettes can come in handy at a few scenes in the game. Not only can they help point out laser trip wires, but they can also slow down Snake's heart rate for better aim (like the Pentazemin pill).

Hand-to-Hand Combat with Lockers

Don't forget to use your hand-to-hand combat moves in the game. For example, use them against a guard if he is standing near a railing and you'll be able to knock him over the edge.

Also, most lockers that don't open

immediately can be forced open with a little persuasion (certain ones require a little C4 though).

Pentazemin is a Synonym for Accuracy

When you come across portions of the game that require lots of precision shooting (such as the sniper areas or, when taking out bombs), make sure to use your Pentazemin pills. It'll slow down the movement of your aiming and give you much better accuracy. Also, when using the sniper guns, lie down on the ground for better accuracy and clearer vantage points.

The joys of Analog

When you're inside a locker and you want to peek out to see if enemies are outside, make sure to ease down the R1 button slowly. It makes use of the analog feature of the dual shock, so if you press it down hard you'll bump into the locker door and it'll cause a sound (consequently alerting any guards who might be outside).

Shooting Lights Out

A lot of environments are interactive in MGS2. Sometimes they're just for show, such as shooting up pots and pans, or bottles or whatever, but often this can come in handy when shooting things like pipes and fire extinguishers to distract enemies. Also, if you shoot out lights, the enemy soldiers tend to behave differently, as they're forced to be more cautious. In general, just keep an eye out for anything that can be shot at, such as the distracting pulley blowing in the wind while fighting Olga Don't overdo it though, the bad guys aren't entirely stupid!





Photo: Walter Iossa

Derek Jeter caught reading.



TOP SECRETS

BATMAN VENGEANCE

Though basically a straightforward, highly atmospheric quest, *Batman: Vengeance* does feature its fair share of tricky moments. Here's how to make it past a few of them, along with some extra helpful hints.

Max Points

Getting the maximum number of points per level is a key to victory. Not only do you get bragging rights, but points also unlock Power Moves. For example, if you gain 20 points, you will unlock The Hammer. That's just the beginning.



Joker on a Wrecking Ball

Your first confrontation with the Clown Prince of Crime has him coming at you aboard a wrecking ball. Simply coerce him into ramming into a huge antenna, then fire away with Batarangs as he's stalled. Be careful if the battle goes on for long, though—the building will eventually start crumbling.



Frozen Guards

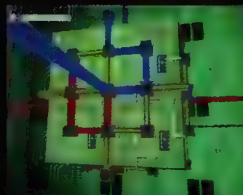
Frozen Guards: In Level 6, there are six guards encased in ice by Mr. Freeze's Flash Freeze gun. Break them all free for hidden keys and three bonus points! Three points may not sound like a lot, but it's definitely worth the effort.



Solve the Puzzle

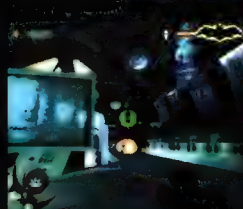
Level 8 holds a set of three cool puzzles. To solve the first one, do this: Connect the two blue wires that lead to two sides of the circuit board cube by pressing X to rotate the highlighted wires. There's a large blue data cable entering the middle of the side of the cube that's facing you, with a second one connected to the top of the cube. Your task is to connect the two by utilizing the groups of blue wires along the sides of the

cube. Look at the picture and see how the first side is arranged. Flip the cube over by continuously pressing up on the analog stick or directional buttons. Arrange the blue flow of data through the blue wires to flow into the second Blue Data Cable connected to the middle of this side of the cube. Voilà! The hack is a success and the door to the next hub will unlock.



Ice Mr. Freeze

Mr. Freeze can be tricky at first, but defeating him can be simple if you know how. See those Prometheus tanks circling up high? Shoot a Remote Charge at one, then detonate it when you see Mr. Freeze crossing its shadow. Ten hits and he'll be down for the count.

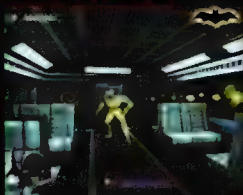


Drive Carefully

During the Batmobile level, don't hit any cars. If you achieve this little task, you'll gain an extra five bonus points.



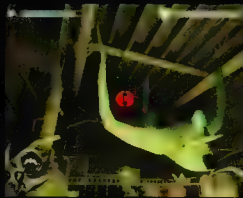
Poison Ivy's Thugs



These plantlike creatures have an insane reach that makes it difficult to get close enough to punch or kick. They have a green slime attack that is like acid when it makes contact. Electric Batarangs are your best bet, or shoot Remote Charges at their feet and activate them (direct shots have no effect).

Beat Poison Ivy

While Poison Ivy herself will not attack you, she's got a pretty mean hunk of vegetation willing to do the job. To beat it, focus on the right or left arm using Batarangs (new boxes respawn often). Once the arm falls, hit the pressure gauge until it spews air, then do the same on the opposite arm. Drop the beast into the acid below by finishing off its middle arm.





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DVD EGGS

Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within DVD

Here are four eggs found on the Final Fantasy DVD. Lock and load, you'll love these:

1. Put in Disc 1 and ensure the yellow circle with the back arrow is selected. Then push Up twice. It will reveal a unique symbol. While it's



highlighted, press X to see a sweet picture gallery of Aki.

2. Put Disc 2 into your PS2, then select the Highlights Menu and hit X. Select "Vehicle Scale

Comparison" then press X. You'll see images of Bandit, Black Boa and Quatro. Push Down,

Right, Right. A blue star in a circle will appear. Hit X and you're on your way to see a two-minute clip of stills featuring artist sketches.

3. This might not be a true egg, but it's something a few people have overlooked and you don't want to miss it. Go to page 2 of the Highlights Menu and press Down until you reach a triangle surrounded by a circle. Press Right, Right to highlight the small video image. Hit X and you'll see "Thriller" performed by the FF cast.

4. Pop in the bonus disc, select Highlights. Go to the second page. Go to the bottom of the screen where the Up and Back arrows are located. Press Right to select the blue box in the bottom right-hand corner of the screen and hit X. It's a sweet video, just for you.

Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace DVD

So you've plodded through the many menus of the *Episode I* DVD? Here are two reasons to plod through again.

1. For this first egg, it's going to take a PS2 remote. Otherwise, you'll be baffled by what it takes. Here goes: Put in the first disc and go to the Options page. Press 11. Wait for it to be accepted. Then press 03, wait. Then 08. After that, you should be granted the outtakes.

2. The second egg will give you various thematic backgrounds for the menu system on disc 1. There are three themes: Coruscant, Tatooine and Naboo. To access them, use the title/chapter select abilities and select the appropriate title.

Title 4: Coruscant

Title 5: Tatooine

Title 6: Naboo

Godfather DVD Collection

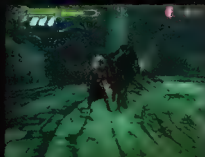
With *Grand Theft Auto III* selling like gang-busters, pick this up for a mafia primer. First, put in the supplemental disc (disc 5) and go to Galleries, then DVD Credits. The cursor will be on the Next option. Press it three times. Now you'll be on the final screen of the DVD credits, but the cursor will have moved up to the Previous option. Move it down and press Next again. You'll see *The Sopranos* stars watching a bootlegged version of *The Godfather*.



Think the 23 "official" missions in *Devil May Cry* are all the action it has to offer? Think again. Scattered throughout the game are 12 Secret Missions that, aside from giving you a more prestigious final ranking, also usually reward you with a precious Blue Orb fragment. Follow the guide below to find out where you can find them and how you can succeed.

Secret Mission: Critical Hit

Get there: Defeat the Phantom in Mission 3, then return to the broken bridge. Where you fell in before to fight skulls, you'll now encounter your first secret mission.

**Defeat a Sin Scissors in one hit.**

Keep moving until the Sin Scissors makes its way down to you. With Alastor, slice at its blade so that it holds it with one hand. Now's your chance! Standing in front of him, blow off his exposed mask.

Secret Mission: Phantom Baby

Get there: Enter the cathedral doors at the beginning of Mission 4. **Kill 100 Phantom Babies in 30 seconds:** Shoot downward like crazy with the handguns, at the same time walking so as to squash as many Phantom Babies as possible. You'll find three groups of them in the room—the near corner, the far corner and the middle of the room.

**Secret Mission: Phantom Baby Part II**

Get there: Clear the previous Secret Mission, then proceed to the study at the end of the corridor on the first floor. **Kill 100 Phantom Babies in 20 seconds with no weapons:** This one's simple. See

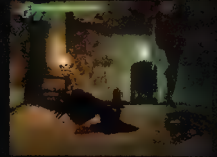


a bug and squash it! Remember to aim at groups rather than chase specific ones—you'll get more that way.

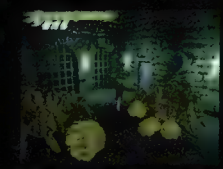
Secret Mission: The Three Beasts

Get there: Defeat the Shadow in Mission 4, then head to the hangar. Keep striking the wall plate and enjoy the ride down to the fourth Secret Mission.

Defeat three Shadows: It was tough the first time—it's thrice as hard now. Your best bet is to target one at a time, taking them as you would otherwise. Just make sure to watch out for the others, as well!

**Secret Mission: One-Eyed Evil**

Get there: Remember where you first ran into the Beelzebubs in Mission 7? Go there after you're rid of the Guiding Light.



Let the Kyklopses take each other out: Stand between the two Kyklopses, and time your jumps so that the rocks they fire don't hit you, but in fact one of them. Then take out the last one yourself.

Secret Mission: Wandering Ghosts

Get there: Exit the greenhouse at the beginning of Mission 11 to where you fought the Kyklopses in Mission 10.

Attain the Blue Orb: Don't kill any enemies! You need their heads—and the Air Hike power—to help you



reach the Orb. Stick with it!

Secret Mission: Water Cell

Get there: Once you've cleared Mission 13's sunken ship—but before Mission 14 officially begins—go back through until you encounter the captain's skeleton. The quarters lie in a small opening near the three staircases that lead to the door that won't open.



Kill eight Blades before they kill you: Constant movement—and possibly a Vital Star—are essential as you shoot away at eight Blades in a very cramped place. Watch out for their missile claws, and move away if one gets too close.

Secret Mission: Treasure of the Reaper

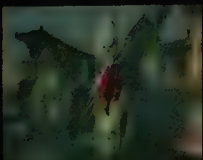
Get there: At the beginning of Mission 15, immediately head down to the round room in the mountain with all of the blue flames leading to it. Take the lift down to the spikes area (where Mission 14 began), and look at the skull carving that blends in with the wall to the left.



Defeat three Shadows: Use the same strategy as in The Three Beasts. And look out for those spikes!

Secret Mission: Stairway to Tranquility

Get there: Go back into the coliseum right after leaving it in Mission 16.



Attain the Blue Orb: This one's pretty straightforward. The Air Hike is essential as you jump from skull to skull, as is the knowledge that you can hold down RT to reposition the camera if it takes you more than one try (which it most likely will).

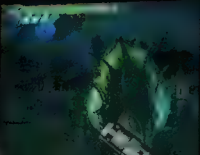
Secret Mission: Shadow of Darkness

Get there: Defeat the Nightmare in Mission 16, then go to the hangar.



Hunt down all of the Shadows: You'll find two Shadows atop the biplane in the hangar. If you lure them down well enough, you can make it so that you need only battle one at a time. Proceed into the main room, and you'll find a third Shadow with which to battle to the back-left portion of it. But that's not all! One more awaits you in the connecting room you haven't visited yet. You should know how to beat them all by now.

Secret Mission: Blue Orb in the Sky



Get there: At the beginning of Mission 17, jump across the broken bridge without falling into the water. (Make sure to save your game at the end of Mission 16, as you only get one shot at this.)

Attain the Blue Orb in the sky: As if it's not hard enough making it to this Secret Mission (using the Air Raid to glide might help), getting the Blue Orb is even tougher. The trick is to work your way into the Death Scythe's tornadoes so as to pick up the Orb—without finding your way into the water,

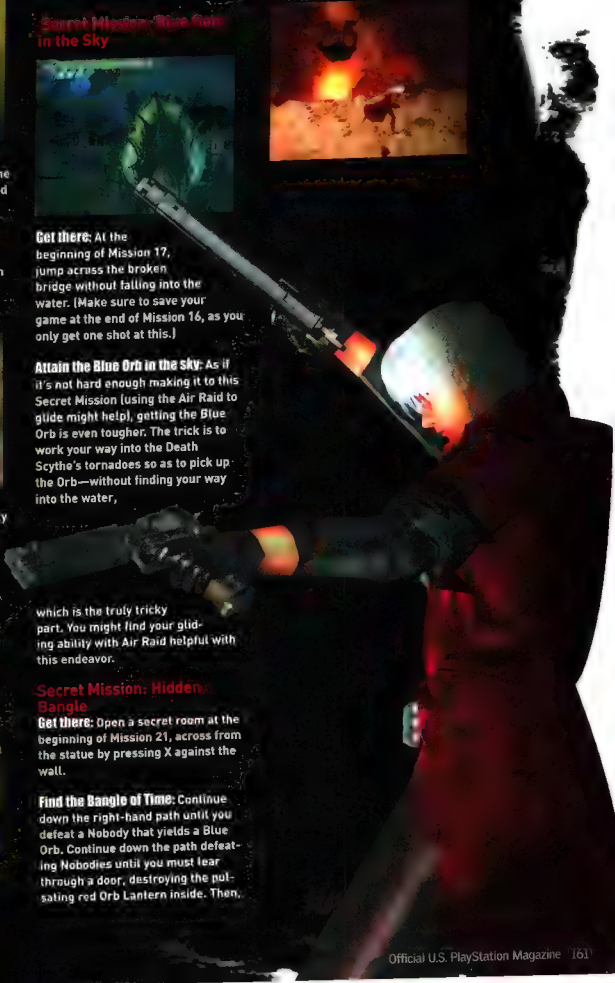
which is the truly tricky part. You might find your gliding ability with Air Raid helpful with this endeavor.

Secret Mission: Hidden Bangle

Get there: Open a secret room at the beginning of Mission 21, across from the statue by pressing X against the wall.

Find the Bangle of Time: Continue down the right-hand path until you defeat a Nobody that yields a Blue Orb. Continue down the path defeating Nobodies until you must leap through a door, destroying the pulsating red Orb Lantern inside. Then,

head up the cliff, where you'll see the dragon; take him down by attacking the nose, and two Frosts appear below. Defeat the Frosts, and jump the new living platforms that appear until you see the Bangle of Time glowing across a crevice on the right-hand side of the wall. With this item, you can stop enemies in their tracks for the duration of your Devil Meter's power.





TRICKS FROM THE 10 BEST-SELLING PLAYSTATION 2 GAMES

① Devil May Cry

The "coolest" game features these "cool" cheats. Enjoy.

Easy mode

Successfully complete mission 3 while using at least one continue. At the start of the next mission, there will be an option to change the game to easy mode. Note: Once easy mode is activated you cannot return to normal mode.

Hard mode

Successfully complete the game to unlock Hard mode.

Legendary Dark Night mode

Successfully complete Hard mode to unlock Legendary Dark Night mode.

Dante Must Die mode

Successfully complete Legendary Dark Night mode to unlock Dante Must Die mode.

Super Dante mode

Successfully complete Dante Must Die mode to unlock Super Dante mode. In this mode, you can transform into a devil, and use magic indefinitely.

system? Because this is a humdinger of a trick. First off, enter the Rosters screen from the options menu. Then choose a defensive team's roster for you to play against. Then change the speed of all the defensive players to 15.

After that, select a team you'd like to play as. Edit all of the RBs, FBs, TEs and backup WRs so they are at a 10 or less rating. Put starting WRs catching and carrying to zero, and leave the rest of their settings alone. Change all of the backup QBs' passing power and accuracy to zero, and make sure they are rated at 10 or less. Make the starting QB's speed, acceleration, carrying, awareness, stamina and agility all set to 99. Change your entire starting OL pass block to 99. Now, make sure to save your roster as a secondary roster (under a new name, not default). Load your newly created roster. Start a two-minute drill on the "All Madden" difficulty setting. Play against the defense that you ruined by making everyone's speed a 15. Select the profile and team that has your modified QB. Find a good passing play and keep using it to score in the two-minute drill. You should be able to get around 63 to 70 points. If the defense does somehow get a good play on you, call a time out to save your time. Run out of bounds if you see a penalty being called. When your game is over you should have a huge negative number as your score. At that point, quit and go to the Madden Cards screen under the options menu. View your stats and you will have over 10 million tokens.

Easy tokens

This one's a lot easier than holding out for the 10 million. Start by going to the Two Minute Drill. Choose the Admirals for defense. Choose your team and make sure you choose a profile to save to, then start playing. Keep throwing to the second wide receiver and you'll score a lot of touchdowns. The more you score, the more tokens you get.

Better catches

Leaving the receiving up to the computer is a good way to end up with fewer catches. The key is to press Triangle a second or a half second before the ball will hit the receiver. The player will often make better-looking and more effective catches, such as a one-handed catch, a jump catch, a spin catch, an over-the-shoulder catch (good for fobs), or a better diving catch if the ball is out of reach.

③ Spy Hunter

Dominating the new classic

Within Spy Hunter you'll find that cheats are unlocked by completing all mission objectives within a set amount of time. To activate the cheats, enter System Options, then choose Extras and Cheat Grid. To play the FMV sequences unlocked in the cheat menu, choose the Movie Player option that is above Cheat Grid.

Saliva "Spy Hunter" Video:

Complete level 1 in 3:40.

Green HUD (Heads-Up Display):

Complete level 2 in 3:35.

Saliva "Your Disease" Video:

Complete level 3 in 2:40.

Night Vision:

Complete level 4 in 3:15.

Early Test Anatomic Video:

Complete level 5 in 3:25.

Extra Cameras:

Complete level 6 in 3:45.

Rainbow HUD (Heads-Up Display):

Complete level 7 in 3:10.

Inversion Camera:

Complete level 8 in 3:05.

Concept Art Video:

Complete level 9 in 3:45.

Fisheye View:

Complete level 10 in 3:15.

Camera Flip:

Complete level 11 in 3:10.

Puke Camera:

Complete level 12 in 3:30.

Making-Of Video:

Complete level 13 in 2:15.

Tiny Spy:

Complete level 14 in 5:10.

Hover Spy:

Complete the entire game.

Super Spy:

Complete all 65 objectives in the game for unlimited ammunition and invincibility for your car.

⑤ NHL 2002

Tips to get Lord Stanley

Tip-ins

Before the puck drops on the season opener, there's a sweet trick that will really help you win. Go into the controller setup and make one of your shoulder buttons the Deflection button. Here's how it works: Say you've assigned your Deflection button as R2. When you're winding up with a defense-

② Madden NFL 2002

Taking it to the NFL

Infinite creation points

Create any type of player your heart desires, then go to Edit Player at the roster screen.



Then find the player you want to edit. Press Right to get to the speed category. Press X, then press X again. From there, you'll have infinite creation points and can make a superstar with all 99's.

Score 10 million Madden tokens

So, you're in the mood to really cheat the

④ Silent Hill 2

Completion bonuses

Successfully complete the game in another game and enter the extra options menu to access new features.

A "Bullet Adjust" option can be seen allowing the normal amount of ammunition found at a location to be doubled or tripled.

A "Noise Effect" option can be toggled. Also, you can fiddle with the "Blood Color," making it green.

Also, you can make it so the game is completely free from distortions.

Additional puzzle difficulty

Successfully complete the game on easy, normal and hard puzzle difficulty settings. Select the hard puzzle difficulty again and begin a new game to have a new combination of puzzles.

Chain saw

Successfully complete the game on the normal difficulty and normal puzzle difficulty settings. Start a new game to find a chain saw among logs in the cemetery.

Hyper Spray

Successfully complete the game on



Times, start a new game to find the Hyper Spray on the south side of the motor home.

Innocent Man Riddle

One of the rooms you will enter in Silent Hill will include six men who have been hung by the ceiling. Your job is to free the innocent man in the group. In easy riddle mode, the innocent man will always be "The Kidnapper." In normal riddle mode, the innocent man will always be "The Arsonist." In hard riddle mode, the innocent man will always be "The Counterfeiter." Once you find out who the innocent man is, pull the corresponding empty noise in the second room to release the body. In his place the Key Of The Persecuted will be on the floor below.

man, hold down R2 while you're holding the shot button. Once the shot is away, continue to hold R2. The shot won't go directly at the net, but at a forward. The forwards will try to tip it in to the net. Usually the goalies will be out to cut off the angle of the shot. This trick makes a huge difference. Be sure to try it out.

Be a big shot

If you're a fan of either the Funnel or Crash the Net offense, make sure to put your biggest shot at the center position. For

made use of the Deflection button, this will make for a good opportunity. If the face-off is on the right of the goalie, draw the puck to the right defenseman. Skate to the middle, while winding up, and hold down the Deflection button. Let her rip and often the left-winger will go for the tip...and a great goal.

③ NASCAR THUNDER 2002

Winning is the only thing

Bonus drivers

Each time you successfully complete season mode two, bonus drivers are unlocked. Complete season mode eight times to unlock all drivers.

Championship win FMV sequence

Successfully complete season mode once to unlock a championship win video.

Eighth championship win FMV sequence

Successfully complete season mode eight times to unlock an eighth championship win FMV sequence.

④ GRAN TURISMO 3:

A-SPEC

From our expert reader

This tip came in from the man among men when it comes to *OPM* reading and GT3 playing. Here's what John Damiani (john_damiani@hotmail.com) from Toronto, ON, had to say:

So you've been working on that Escudo, have you? I received a couple hundred e-mails from people claiming to have beaten my speed record from last month (891.3 mph). Many of these people reached over

1,000. Seeing this, I whipped out my own Escudo and began to fool around with it some more. I ended up with a top speed of 1,264.8 mph. If you too would like to break the 1,000 mph barrier, here's my current setup:

Tires:

Racing Super Soft F&R

Suspension:

Spring Rate: 4.0 F&R

Ride Height: 75 F&R

Shock Bound/Rebound: L7 all around

Camber/Toe Angles: All at 0

Stabilizers: L3 F&R

Brakes:

Brake Balance: L1 F&R

Drivetrain:

Limited Slip: Initial at 5/5;

Accel at 60/60; Decel at 5/5

Gear Ratios: Bring the auto

setting to 48; then bring the

final gear to 2.798; finally, set

the individual gears as far to

the left as possible. You

should be left with:

1st 4.604

2nd 2.888

3rd 2.014

4th 1.485

5th 1.157

6th 0.875

7th -----

FIN 2.798

Other:

Downforce: 0.38 front/1.08

rear

ASM/TCS: 0

VCD: 10%

It was brought to my attention by many of the other readers that there are, in fact, quite a few other cars capable of the wheelie. I won't list them because there are too many, but basically any car with an adjustable downforce (this is a must) and high horsepower should be able to pull one off with the above formula. Just remember to go the opposite direction during the speed test so you can circle the track as much as you want

⑩ TIME CRISIS 2

W/GUNCON

Playing Shoot-'em-up

Automatic weapons

Successfully complete story mode twice to unlock automatic weapons.

Infinite ammunition

Successfully complete story mode using automatic weapons to unlock infinite ammunition.

Wide ammunition

Successfully complete story mode using infinite ammunition to unlock wide ammunition.

Free play mode

Every time the player uses all credits in story mode, one credit is added. After nine



instance, with the St. Louis Blues, put Keith Tkachuk at center and move Doug Weight to the wing, or third-line center. It'll help you score early and often.

Manual means more

When you're one-on-one with the goalie, make sure you hold Triangle to start the manual deke. Push left and right to move the stick. With the superstars like Mario Lemieux a manual deke will ruin the goalie.

Face-offs and deflection goals

If you've followed the earlier advice and

⑥ NCAA Football 2002

Create a Super Player

On the main screen, enter the season. Choose the Raiders option. Create a player on the game and then save him as Mario. Go to the Edit Player option. Find your created player and choose him. Now move over the Speed category and press X. On the Edit screen, move down to the Ratings category and press X again. You will now be able to boost up your player's ratings to 99 in each category, giving you the ability to create a super player.



Load up your created player on the Edit Player screen and access the Ratings option.



Edit the ratings of your player by moving the bar all the way to the right in each category.



You will now have a "99" in each category, turning your character into a super player.

Silent Scope 2



Extra Five Seconds

In the middle of the game, press START to pause. Then press Left, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, X. Once you have entered the code, the clock will gain five seconds, but one of your lives will go down.

Extra Half Life

In the middle of the game, press START to pause. Then press Circle, X, Right, Left, Right, Left, Down, Down, Up, Up. Once you enter the code, one of your lives will increase by half, but your time will go down.



When your time is running low, pause and put in the code.



You'll gain more time, and lose half of one of your lives.

credits, the credits change to free play mode.

Extra Quick And Crash minigames

Get one of the top five scores in the "Quick And Crash" minigame to unlock additional "Quick And Crash" minigames.



TRICKS FROM THE 10 BEST-SELLING PS ONE GAMES

1 TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2

Unlocking the best in skateboarding

Enter these masterful cheats correctly and the screen will shake.

All levels

Pause the game, then hold L1 and press Up, Triangle, Right, Up, Square, Triangle, Right, Up, Left, Square[2], Up, Circle[2], Up, Right.

Special meter always full

Pause the game, then hold L1 and press X, Triangle, Circle, Circle, Up, Left, Triangle, Square to always have a full special meter.



All hidden characters

Pause the game, then hold L1 and press Square, Circle, Right, Triangle, Circle, Right, Circle, Triangle, Right, Square, Right, Up[2], Left, Up, Square.

All gaps and Private Carrera

Pause the game, then hold L1 and press Down, Up, Left, Left, Circle, Left, Up, Triangle, Triangle, Up, Right, Square, Square, Up, X.

2 DRIVER 2

No police, no problem

Start by facing the interstate in Rio. Make a U-turn and go the opposite way. Turn right at the third street you see, which will take you past a big lake. Immediately following the lake, you'll spy an intersection. Turn left there to find a building with a garage door and a regular door. That building will feature a barbed-wired fence. To open the door, go to the huge building to the right. It is black with white windows. You'll have to find the door on the left side of this building, which is facing the other building you are trying to open. Push Triangle at that door to unlock the immunity cheat for no police. To access this cheat, select Gameplay, then Secrets at the options screen.

3 CASTLEVANIA CHRONICLES

Simon's song

Sound Select

While selecting original mode or arrange mode, hold L1 + R1 to unlock an option to change the music played in the game.

Extra Option

At the main menu, press Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, Circle, X to

unlock the "Extra Option" menu.

Art Gallery

For each stage completed in arrange mode (there are 26) one illustration by Ayami Kojima, the artist for Akumajou Dracula X: Gekka no Yasoukyoku/Castlevania: Symphony of the Night and Akumajou Dracula X68000/Castlevania Chronicles will be unlocked at the "Special Option" screen under the "Option" menu.

Time attack mode

Successfully complete arrange mode to unlock time attack mode.

4 MADDEN NFL 2002

Cheating with your Madden Cards

When you're earning and spending Madden Cards, you're going to use them once and then they're gone. Or are they? Save your profile after you've earned tokens and spent them to get cards. During your next game, use all the Madden Cards you want, but don't save your Profile! First, save the game, then reset it. Start the game again and it'll load the profile. Then select Madden Cards: Activate. If done correctly, all of your cards should be back in your stash. Do this after every game and you should be able to use the cheats indefinitely. It's particularly cool because this was done in Franchise Mode. Cheat away!

5 GRAN TURISMO 2

Drive Time

Mark Martin's NASCAR #6 Ford Taurus

To obtain this car you must first purchase a Ford Taurus and then perform the Racing modification.

License test cars

To get the following cars, you must get all gold on the given license:
Gold B: Spoon 52000 [J]
Gold A: Dodge Concept Car [Red]
Gold IC: 3000GT LM Edition
Gold IB: Del Sol LM Edition
Gold IA: FTO LM Edition
Gold S: Toyota GT-ONE Race Car '99

7 SPYRO: YEAR OF THE DRAGON

Do these right and you'll hear a sound. Do it wrong, and you'll be hit over the head with a foam anvil.

Extra hit points

Pause the game and press Circle, R1, Circle, L1, Circle, R2, Circle, L2, Circle.

Hard mode

Pause the game and press Circle, Square, Right, Left, Right, Square, Circle, Square.

Fiat mode

Pause the game and press Left, Right, Left, Right, L1, R1, L1, R1, Square, Circle.

8 SPIDER-MAN

Does everything a spider can

Unlock everything

Select the "Special" option from the main

menu, then choose the "Cheats" selection. Enter "EEL NATS" as a code to unlock all secrets in the game.

Level select

Select the "Special" option from the main menu, then choose the "Cheats" selection. Enter "XCLSIOR" as a code to unlock the level select option on the "Special" menu.

Invincibility

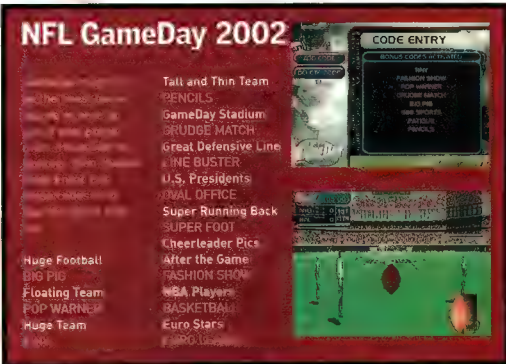


Select the "Special" option from the main menu, then choose the "Cheats" selection. Enter "RUSTCRST" as a code to make Spider-Man invulnerable.

Infinite webbing

Select the "Special" option from the main menu, then choose the "Cheats" selection. Enter "STRUDL" as a code to give Spider-Man unlimited webbing.

All comic books



Select the "Special" option from the main menu, then choose the "Cheats" selection. Enter "ALLSIXC" as a code to unlock all comic books.

All characters in gallery

Select the "Special" option from the main menu, then choose the "Cheats" selection. Enter "CVIEW EM" as a code to unlock all characters in the viewer.

All movies

Select the "Special" option from the main menu, then choose the "Cheats" selection. Enter "WATCH EM" as a code to unlock all FMV sequences.

Joel James Jewett

Select the "Special" option from the main menu, then choose the "Cheats" selection. Enter "RULUR" as a code to unlock Joel James Jewett (Neversoft's president) in the character gallery.

9 SYPHON FILTER 2

End Level

Pause the game, highlight the "Map" option, then hold Right + L2 + R2 + Circle + Square + X (simultaneously). If you entered the code correctly, you will hear a sound. Then, enter the options screen and choose the "Cheats" selection. This allows the current mission to be successfully completed.

Super Agent mode

Pause the game, highlight the "Weaponry" option, then hold L2 + Select + Circle + Square + X (simultaneously). If you entered the code correctly, you will hear a sound. Then, enter the options screen and choose the "Cheats" selection. Super Agent mode makes enemies weaker, so they take less ammunition to kill.

D.C. City Park multiplayer stage

Find the dirty laundry in the New York City Slums District level. It's in one of the wash-

ing machines in the first Sniper Building. This is the building that is similar to the slums district level in multiplayer mode. **Disco Underground multiplayer stage** In the Disco 32 level, after killing the bodyguard on the catwalk, three more guards will run in the door. Kill all three before they throw a grenade at you. None of them have flak jackets. When you kick open the doors to the next dance floor with big speakers in

Tricks Forum

Welcome to the Tricks Forum, the latest and greatest in OPM's Top Secrets section. Here's how it works: You send us your questions and we do our best to answer them. Or if you send tricks, maybe we'll print them. Welcome and enjoy.

SSX Tricky Talk

What the heck is J.P. saying in SSX Tricky? He's talking in French, and it's driving me crazy.

Ray Carver, raymondcarver@yahoo.com



With our crack staff of French-literates, we translated a bit of the J.P. babble for you.

Hé Moby, t'as pas un bouton dans le cou? Is that a zit on your neck?

Hé Mac, pas d'chance avec les filles hein? No luck with the ladies, huh?

"The car will start to rock and you'll notice your life increase."

Hé Elise, t'es amoureuse, non? You love da man?

Hé Brodi, j'oli mulet! Nice mule!

Hé Marisol, craignons d'être jolie, non? It sucks to be nice, huh?

Hé Kaori, j'viens d'écraser ton chat! I just ran over your cat!

Hé Zoé, un p'tit bisou, c'est possible? How about a kiss, eh?

Hé Luther, je suis la tête et toi les jambes! You're the muscle, I'm the brains, eh?

Hé Eddie, tu surfes toujours sur cette planche pourrie? Still driving that piece of junk?

Hé Paymon, t'as la fièvre aphteuse? When you pick up foot and mouth disease?

Hé Seeliah, tu veux quelques conseils pour t'habiller? You want a few fashion tips?

Monster Rancher 3 Tips and Tricks!

To unlock Zans, you must complete the storyline in the Brillia training area.

To unlock Jokers, you must complete the storyline in the Goat training area.

Here are some very rare and cool monsters:

1. Zuna (Zan/??? from DDA Hardcore [Dead or Alive 2] PlayStation 2 DVD.

2. Zan (Zan/Brillia) from R.E.M. music CD. Automatic for the future.

Magi (Joker/??? from Monster Rancher Battle Cards 2

PlayStation CD.

Trigon (Dragon/??? from Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon DVD.

Oh (Golem/??? from SmackDown! 2 PlayStation CD.

Jay, rebel35@disco.net

While unlocking monsters in MR3, I found that in SSX, there was a henger breed called Metranix which was blue with skis! I tried to unlock from Unimusha, but I was not of a high enough rank. However, I could see a shadow of a sword-wielding monster. I'd bet that it is a samurai monster. Maybe something for you to check out. Also in Gran Turismo 3, there is a monster which looks like a race car driver, named Futurunner who loves to race.

Anay M., ActiActo5@aol.com

Spicing up Gran Turismo 3

Endurance races are boring! Especially when you're 15 laps ahead making your third run at Rome Circuit trying to win that F68R/s. So, what can add some additional excitement? Bumper Soccer.

The idea of this game-within-the-game is to knock one or more of the little blue cones all the way around the track by knocking it once per lap. To begin, knock the cones into the playing field the track during the race. There are two sets of cones available, one at each end of the pit. Put both sets in play just before you always win the race. The other monster racer into them whenever you get a chance. They sail mostly sideways when you hit them at high speed, and try not to knock the power line guardrail, which places them out of play. Oh, and of course, try to win the race.

The amazing thing about this is that the Gran Turismo

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light poles, and the other cones will go in to knock the other around, though not as enthusiastically as you will. Keep your cones bouncing!

David Catena, catena@sig.net

Grand Theft Auto 3 Tips and Queries

I've been playing GTA3 lately, and I'm wondering about something I found in Skidrow's cave. If you go to the cave in the mountains (just northeast of the Corbinan town) there is a weather station or something on top of the mountain. You can see planes going up there and landing. Do you know how to get up there? Is it even possible? I'm confused!

nekoq@aol.com

Confused? Or ambitious? There's one easy way to get to that spot: Walk right up the mountain if you can get it. We haven't been lucky enough to topple the Police tower, but we're still trying.

Grab a "normal" vehicle (hookers don't like Police cars.

Just pull up next to a hooker. The wife will wake up, your car, lean over, and eventually get in. Take her to a secluded area like an ally or the park and come to a complete stop. The car will start to rock and you'll notice your life start to increase. (one point gained is one point less spent on car repairs up to 100 life points, and you can double as much as you desire or as much as your wallet allows)

David C. Stults, Dav5wonders@webtv.net

the corners, you will need to kill these three guards before the guard above you can throw a grenade. Save your BIZ-2 ammo for him, run to the right, and hide behind the speaker. Kill the two guards on the floor. As the guard above you runs around so he can throw a grenade, use the BIZ-2 for a head shot. He does have a flak jacket.

Jungle multiplayer stage

Kill Archer at the very end of the C-130 Wreck Site level with one shot (head shot). It is recommended that you use the silenced sniper rifle to kill him because of its zooming capabilities.

FINAL FANTASY TACTICS

Opening up the heavens

Get Cloud

This must be done during Chapter Four.

1. Go to Zeltenia Castle and listen to the rumor called "Cursed Island."

2. Buy a flower from Aeris at Zarghida Trade City, then go to Goug machine city with Mustadio. The screen will fade and go to a scene of Mustadio, Ramza and a steel ball.

3. Go to the bar in Goland Coal City and listen to the rumor of the "Ghost of Colliery."

4. After this, go to Lesalia Imperia and the screen should show a scene of a bar. When you leave, invite Beowulf to join your party.

5. Now that you have Beowulf, go to Goland Coal City and you will fight four battles here and save Reis. After you save Reis you will get a Zodiac Stone that will trigger the steel ball.

6. Return to Goug Machine City again and add the Robot to your party.

7. Now that you have the robot,

go to Nelvessa Temple. You will

fight another robot. Kill him

and you will receive a stone

that will bring Cloud to your

world.

8. Now go back to

Goug Machine City

and you will trigger

the time portal

machine and it will suck

Cloud from the future, bringing him

to your world.

9. Now go to Zarghida Trade City

and save Cloud from the thieves who

are punking Aeris. Note: If this part didn't

work, make sure that you killed Dycerag

and his Zodiac Soul Adramek.

When Cloud joins your party all he can

do is defend and attack. You'll need to

find his Materia Blade so that he can

use all of his limit attacks from Final

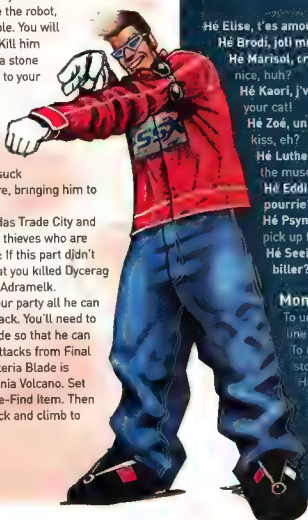
Fantasy VII. The Materia Blade is

located in the Bervania Volcano. Set

your party's on Move-Find Item. Then

go to the highest rock and climb to

the top of it.



GLOBAL COVER-AGE

A look at Japanese box art versus our own versions

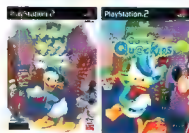
We all know that Japanese releases of games often differ from our own in terms of gameplay. But at the same time, marketers often develop region-specific box art. We've collected a few examples for you to check out yourself. Below, you'll see Japanese versions to the left and American ones on the right

DEVIL MAY CRY



Now this just isn't fair. Cool as Dante may look on our version of the Devil May Cry box, he's a zillion times more badass for the Land of the Rising Sun.

DONALD DUCK: GOIN' QUACKERS



We angry Westerners like Donald in pissed-off mode. It's obvious from Daisy and Gyro on Japan's box art, though, that they prefer him happy, shaking his fine-feathered ass

DYNASTY WARRIORS 2



You may not be able to see it very well, but the top of this box features an English spelling of the Japanese title, Shin Sangokumusou. Is it just us who wonders why they even bother to do so?

FIFA 2002



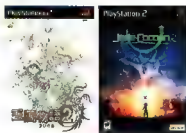
Sometimes Japan chooses a different cover athlete than us—household Japanese names like...well, we assume this handsome lad to be. So, in turn, everyone in America knows who...um...that guy we get is.

ICO



We've voiced our displeasure with the U.S. box art for this fantastic puzzle game in the past. We'll let you decide for yourself about the East's version

JADE COCOON 2



Apparently, a bunch of open-mouthed anime characters drawn with map pencils don't cut it in the American market. Instead, for us a huge dragon dwarfs the main character [whose mouth we can only presume to be gaping].

SILENT HILL 2



It looks like Japanese gamers would opt for nine red squares over the freaky green face preferred by us American folk.

SSX



A classic case of flat-out contrasting art styles. At least they bothered to color all of ours.

VICTORIOUS BOXERS



In Japan, Victorious Boxers is a big-time anime series, so its cover art capitalizes. But how many Americans know of it? It's just straight-up boxing here.

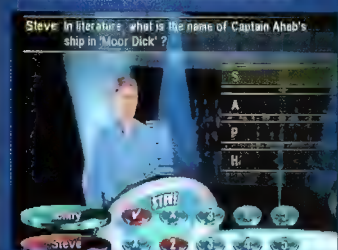
JACK BEATS OFF DICK



Board game manufacturer TDC Games recently agreed, after a federal judge's preliminary injunction, to cease publication of its adult-oriented You Don't Know Dick. Seems the folks at Jellyvision weren't so happy with its similarity to their You Don't Know Jack games.

MORE "MOOR DICK"

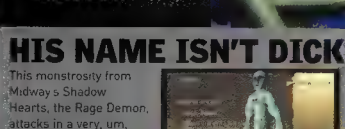
A quick message to the slew of people who responded to last month's question found in The Weakest Link, informing us it was a typo for Moby Dick and that the real answer is, "Pequod." Yes, we know. However, it's nice to see a few of you answered our call for responses in the proper way (i.e., as lewdly as possible). Here are a few of our favorite answers to the question you see in the screenshot:



The Peerd Dan Sketton, L. Field
[Choice H is] Head That Does All the Thinking Matt Brooks, Sspudboy@aol.com
Everyone knows that the guy who wrote Moby Dick was...Lew Forckin.

X-FOX

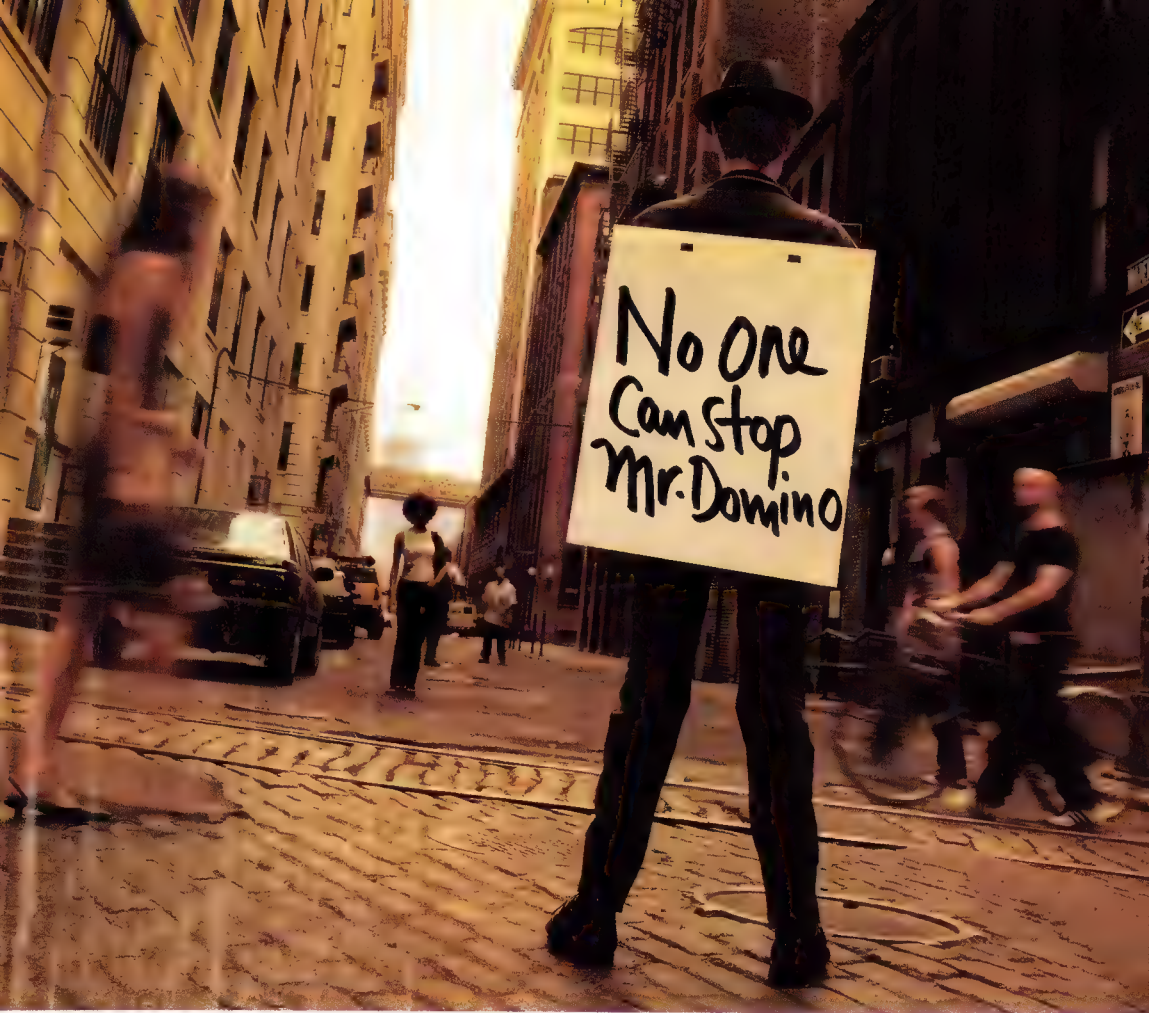
Small-business owner Bill Gates was obviously very enthusiastic as he unveiled the Xbox gaming system to the masses at the Comdex show in Las Vegas. Good luck in the game for No. 2, Billy.



This monstrosity from Midway's Shadow Hearts, the Rage Demon, attacks in a very, um, interesting way, using his "protrusion in the nether region." Just don't get him too excited!

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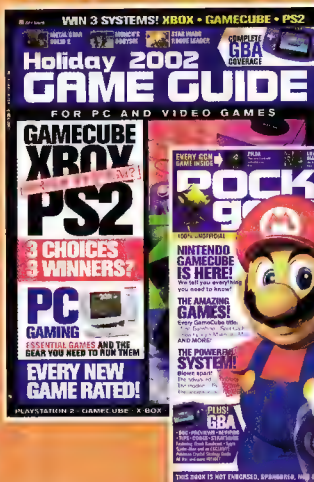
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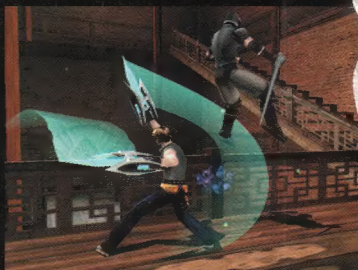


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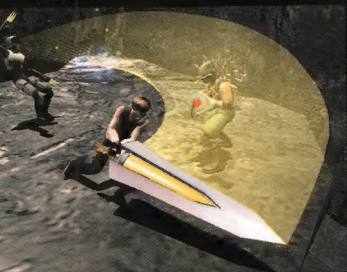
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